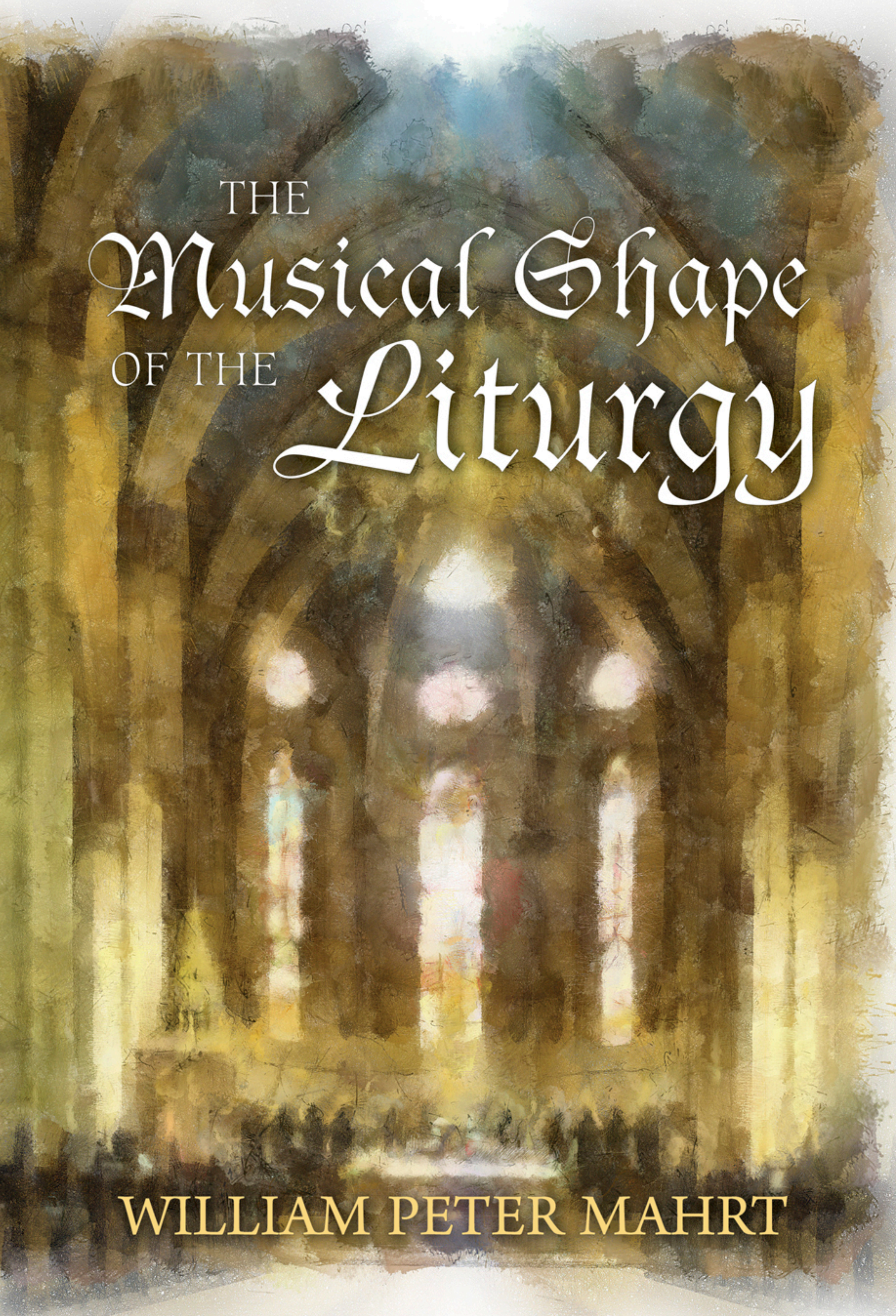


THE *Musical Shape* OF THE *Liturgy*

WILLIAM PETER MAHRT

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CMAA

Church Music Association of America

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To the memory of
Prof. William F. Pohl
Msgr. Richard J. Schuler
Fr. Donald Neilson

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PREFACE

That the music of the liturgy should be sacred and beautiful has been an issue from the time of the Second Vatican Council to the present. These two criteria were already articulated by Pope St. Pius X in his motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903) and have remained current in ecclesiastical documents ever since. The problems have been similar in both these times: popular and theatrical styles of music dominated the music of the church and threatened the sacrality of the liturgy. Since the council, the journal *Sacred Music* has been an advocate of the view of music in the liturgy as sacred and beautiful.[1] I have attempted to contribute to the discussion, mainly in this journal, and now a collection of my articles has been brought together and presented here. They range over a period of nearly forty years, during which time much has been learned, both in practice and in scholarship. I have, however let them stand as they were originally written, since revising them now would require writing a thoroughly new work; although a few points may now be obsolete,[2] their publication here is based upon my conviction that their argument is still fundamentally valid.

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[1] *Sacred Music* is the journal of the Church Music Association of America and is a continuation of *Cæcilia*, begun in 1874, and *The Catholic Choirmaster*, begun in 1915; these two were merged and began publication as *Sacred Music* in Spring, 1965.

[2]Three examples stand out: (1) the history of the origins and transmission of chant from Rome to Gaul has been developed considerably, though many points of it remain in lively discussion today; for an account of the present state of knowledge, see David Hiley, *Gregorian Chant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

The volume is dedicated to the memory of three practitioners of the liturgy, who loved its beauty and sacredness; much of what is presented here originated in fraternal discussions with them over the years. The understanding of liturgical and musical issues, however, is as much the result of the practice of the liturgy as of theoretical and historical study. Here the faithful singers of the St. Ann Choir in Palo Alto and its celebrants have been my co-workers for nearly fifty years; likewise, the colloquia of the Church Music Association of America—which were established under the aegis of Msgr. Richard Schuler, continued under Fr. Robert Skeris, and are now on my watch—have provided mountain-top experiences of liturgical music that have been the source of much insight and delight. I readily acknowledge the inspired organization of recent colloquia by Arlene Oost-Zinner, assisted by Jeffrey Tucker. Finally, I am grateful for the initiative and persistence of Mr. Tucker in conceiving the project of this present collection and furthering it in every way possible. Thanks also to Judy Thommesen for expert typography.

2009), pp. 83–100; (2) the rhythm of *organum purum* has been clarified substantially, see Jeremy Yudkin, "The Rhythm of Organum Purum," *Journal of Musicology*, 2 (1983), 355–76; and 3) the authenticity of motets attributed to Josquin Des Prez is currently the subject of active discussion; for a recent extended discussion, see David Fallows, *Josquin* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

THE PARADIGM



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THE MUSICAL SHAPE OF THE LITURGY, PART I: THE GREGORIAN MASS IN GENERAL

The reforms of the liturgy resulting from the Second Vatican Council have greatly increased the freedom of choice of liturgical music;[1] the council also encouraged the composition of new music for the sacred liturgy.[2] However, every freedom entails a corresponding responsibility; and it does not seem that, in the years since the council, the responsibility for the choice of sacred music has been exercised with equal wisdom in all circles. To judge by what is normally heard in the churches, one might even conclude that the Church no longer holds any standards in the realm of sacred music, and that, in fact, anything goes.

The council did not leave all up in the air, however, and if its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy had been seriously heeded, a living tradition would still be alive everywhere, and we would have added musical works of some permanence to the "store of treasures"[3]

This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 102, no. 3 (1975).

[1] Even the choice of the sung prayers of the Mass, once so thoroughly regulated, is left to the judgment of individuals; alternatives to the *Graduale Romanum* are simply other songs appropriate for the part of the Mass, the day, or the season.

[2] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 121.

[3] Ibid.

of sacred music. The council laid down some rather specific norms which can serve as a basis for developing an understanding of sacred music and thus for choosing wisely.

In its chapter on sacred music, the council declared that the solemn sung form of the liturgy is the higher form,[4] that of all the arts music represents the greatest store of traditional treasures of the liturgy,[5] that music is the more holy insofar as it is intimately connected to the liturgical action,[6] and that Gregorian chant is the normative music of the Roman rite.[7] Moreover, in speaking of innovations in general, it required that new forms derive organically from existing ones.[8]

The solemn high Gregorian Mass is thus the more noble form; it can be taken to meet the norm of being intimately connected with the liturgical action. Since new forms must derive organically from existing ones, it follows that Gregorian chant must serve as some kind of model, and that the proper understanding of the role of music in the liturgy must be based upon a knowledge of the intimate connection of Gregorian chant with the liturgical action.

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4 "The liturgical action is given the more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly with song [*solemniter in cantu*], with the assistance of sacred ministers, and with the active participation of the people." Article 113. (The translations given here differ sometimes from the current American translations; the latter tend to weaken the vocabulary slightly, and compromise the clarity and strength of the texts; in this the German bishops were better served in the translations provided them by the experts than were the Americans; cf. *Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche, Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil; Konstitutionen, Dekrete und Erklärungen, Lateinisch und Deutsch, Kommentare*, Teil I; Freiburg: Herder, 1966).

5 "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than of any other art." Art. 112.

6 "Therefore sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action." Art. 112.

7 "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as proper to the Roman liturgy, and therefore, other things being equal, it holds the principal place in the liturgical action." Art. 116.

8 "There must be no innovations unless the good of the Church requires them; and care must be taken that any new form adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing." Art. 23.

The following essay considers the relationship of the musical styles of Gregorian chant to individual liturgical acts, and to the overall shape of the liturgical action.[9] In order to proceed to these matters, there must first be a proper understanding of the role of history, and of its relationship to present practice.

The sacred liturgy is bound with the entire history of the Church, and questions of reform are generally linked with matters of the precedents of history. Some of the recent reforms of the liturgy have been based upon extensive historical scholarship. However excellent that scholarship may be, it has suffered from certain misconceptions. Given the scarcity of the documents of the early liturgy, it is understandable why its histories have largely been histories of the liturgical texts, sacramentaries, *ordines*, antiphonaries, etc. The excellent scholarship that has placed modern critical editions of these early books in our hands[10] is worthy of admiration; yet in studying the texts of the liturgy, some have forgotten that while liturgy is regulated largely in its texts, it does not consist of a series of texts to be read, but rather a series of sacred actions to be done.[11] The solemn Mass consists of an integrated complex of words, music, and movement, together with other visual and even olfactory elements; to discuss the history of the missal, and the history of sacred music separately leaves a

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[9] The term liturgical action is used here in two related senses. The council used *actio liturgica* in the sense of the act of worship as a whole. This, however, is composed of individual liturgical actions, such as acts of petition or praise, intercessory prayer, acts of offering, of consecration, and processional actions.

[10] For example, Jean Deshusses, ed., *Le Sacramentaire Gregorien; ses principales formes d'apres les plus anciens manuscrits*; Spicilegium Friburgense, Vol 16; (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires, 1971); Michael Andrieu, ed., *Les Ordines romani du haut Moyen Age*, 5 vols. (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1931–1956; reprinted 1960–1965); and René-Jean Hesbert, ed., *Antiphonale missarum sextuplex* (Bruxelles: Vromant, 1935; reprinted, Rome: Herder, 1967).

[11] While the best historians of the liturgy are aware of this problem, it is difficult always to envision a rite as such, and easier to consider its text. The very useful work of Joseph Andreas Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (tr. Francis A. Brunner, 2 vols.; New York: Benziger, 1951, 1955) does not always escape this pitfall.

most important matter of integration overlooked: they both developed together, and only make sense together.

Yet even more critical is the basis upon which the precedents of history are used. There are two different points of view about the use of the history of the liturgy. The first I should like to call progressive, knowing full well that it is the more traditional. It sees the liturgy as intimately connected with the growth of the Church. The value of its history is to explain to us how it developed and what its levels of meaning are. The most important historical precedent is the living tradition known and understood by the people, and cultivated by those who grew up in it. From this point of view, reform can mean clarifying, sometimes even simplifying, sometimes developing, sometimes adding, according to the nature of the liturgy as it is already understood; such reforms progress one item at a time, favoring stability and continuity over innovation and reversal. This is the sense of the mandate of the council concerning the reform of the missal.[12]

The other point of view I should like to call antiquarian, knowing full well that it considers itself progressive and fashionable. It sees the larger part of tradition as an undesirable development, and romantically points to sometime in the distant past when an ideal state had been reached; it proposes to junk late accretions, and restore primitive practices. Characteristically, its ideal time is a time very early in history for which there is little concrete information; what data there are allow for great freedom in restoring the ancient practice. When the origin of a rite is known, the rite is to be reduced to its original form, or excised. Certain elements of the present reform have been influenced by such antiquarianism.

The result of this misuse of history has been to remove history from consideration, since those who were only a while ago calling for changes on the basis of "historical precedents" have succeeded in seriously breaking the tradition, and now feel free to discard the whole notion of historical precedent to create something relevant

[12] Art. 21–40.

only to the present.[13] The "antiquarianism" of such a position is clearly a ruse.[14]

Taking the former view that the living tradition is the best school of the liturgy, I should like to examine the Gregorian Mass in its received form to see what ways liturgical action and music are intimately related, with a view to eventual evaluation of more recent developments.

If the total liturgical act is considered, it is apparent that in the solemn sung liturgy, music plays an essential role. On the highest level the purpose of music is the "glory of God and the santification of the faithful;" "it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, [and] confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites."[15] On a more practical level, music can be seen as the principle of order in the liturgy, for through music, every item which is otherwise simply a text is given a distinctive shape. A solemn Mass is a thoroughly musical event; practically every part of the Mass is set to music, and the result is, on the one hand, a delineation and differentiation of functions, and on the other hand, a rhythmic and continual flow from one item to the next which creates a continuity and orderly sequence of events. Thus, in addition to shaping the individual parts, music gives the liturgy its overall shape.

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[13] Documentation of such developments can be found in two works of James Hitchcock, *The Decline and Fall of Radical Catholicism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), and *The Recovery of the Sacred* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974).

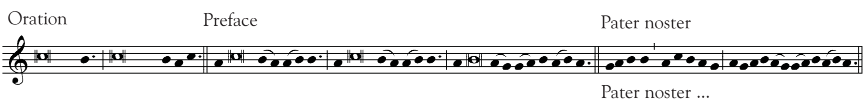
[14] The altar facing the people is a good example of this. It was introduced almost universally after the council, and congregations were told that this was the restoration of ancient practice; but scholars of the liturgy, as early as Dölger (1925), Jungmann, Bouyer, and recently Klaus Gamber, have known better and said so. Nevertheless, the altar *versus populum* is still commonly thought to represent a primitive practice, and this belief has actually been the vehicle of a substantial change, which has neither been for the benefit of the Church, nor has it developed from an existing practice; neither did it even represent a primitive practice. The popular psalmody of Gelineau is another case in point. It began by claiming to "restore" the Psalms to the people; under this rubric it succeeded in introducing cheap pseudo-popular melodies into the services; it was only a logical continuation of that movement that brought in guitars, string bass, drums, amplifiers, etc., and, incidentally, threw out the Psalms.

[15] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 112.

The parts of the Gregorian liturgy can be distinguished generally according to who performs them: the prayers and lessons sung by the priest or other cleric, the Proper of the Mass, sung by a schola or choir, and the Ordinary of the Mass, sung by the congregation; each of these receives its own characteristic musical treatment.

The prayers and the lessons sung by the priest are the most essential and central parts of the Mass; here the texts are most important and were fixed and written down the earliest. Their simple, formulaic melodies are well suited to the hieratic delivery of prayer and the proclaiming of the lessons. Even among these pieces, there is a beautiful ordering of each melody to the character or relative importance of the part.

Of the priest's prayers, the tone for the oration is the simplest; these brief, economical collects, wonders of Roman incisiveness and brevity, are set forth to a tone at once noble and simple.

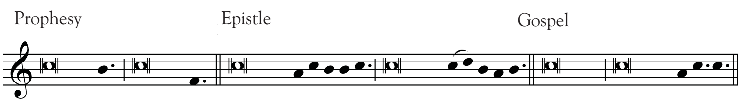


The tone for the preface, however, is much more elaborate and rhetorical; its two reciting notes and its aab scheme give it a strong periodicity which projects the more elaborate texts of the prefaces. The tone of the *Pater noster* bears a clear relation to that of the preface, but is a more purely syllabic setting, with no recitation; of all the priest's prayers, it is the most developed. As such, it takes its place in a cumulative sequence of elaboration that leads to the communion. But what of the canon? The canon may have been sung aloud at an early stage of the liturgy; but by the mid-eighth century, it was said inaudibly.[16] In the context of these sung prayers, the silence of the canon takes its place as a significant musical device. Silence of itself

[16] Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, II, p. 138.

should hardly be significant, but silence in the midst of a complex of other sounds, can be a most eloquent style.[17]

Of the lessons each receives a tone suited to the clear delivery of a prose text, being simple recitation on a pitch, with musical punctuation of the half and full stop.



But in the case of the lessons, something of the different characters of the books themselves is reflected in the tones. The tone for the prophesy is somewhat stark, even slightly harsh in the juxtaposition of the tritone between the notes of the half and the full cadences. Further, the descent of the fifth may suggest a trumpet call, something appropriate to a prophet. The epistle tone is more elaborate and hortatory, appropriate to the exhortation-filled styles of the letters of the apostles. The tone for the gospel is the simplest of them all, a simplicity perhaps appropriate to the gospel, but also somewhat analogous to the canon in setting the most important lesson to the simplest melody.

The propers of the Mass provide another kind of order. In general, they are not a liturgical action in themselves, but they are a musical complement to some other action, which usually includes a procession. While their texts are regularly drawn from the Psalms, their musical style can be seen as suited to the particular actions they complement. They vary from relatively syllabic to very melismatic. The communion antiphon is the most nearly syllabic, and in the unaccompanied singing of syllabic chants, the

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[17] In the sung Mass according to the *Novus ordo Missae*, the singing of the canon, and the special emphasis placed upon the words of consecration by the melodies at least preserve a sacral element. On the other hand, in the low Mass in English, the conversational style of translation and delivery has in fact encouraged some congregations indiscriminately to join in the saying of the doxology at the conclusion of the canon. Worse, at concelebrated Masses, where the sound of several priests saying the words of consecration together already sounds like a congregation, I have observed congregations joining in the words of consecration.

rhythm of the words can project a strong sense of movement. It is at the communion that there is the most movement, and if the communion antiphon is alternated with verses of the Psalms,[18] it enlivens and spiritualizes the orderly sense of movement characteristic of congregational communion. The introit antiphon is slightly more melismatic than the communion; it accompanies the procession of the clergy, a procession which does not entail quite so much motion, but includes the incensation of the altar. The antiphon may be repeated after the verse, and additional verses may be used, depending upon how much time is needed for the action.[19] In both of these cases, the duration of the text is dependent upon the action itself.[20] The offertory responsory is a more melismatic chant than either of the two preceding, and it accompanies the offertory prayers of the priest as well as his incensation of the bread and wine and of the altar. There is less processional activity there, and the more melismatic style of the chant seems to encourage reflection and to project a sense of repose. Here, as with the introit and the communion, many manuscripts provide verses to the offertories, which can be used if time allows.[21]

The most melismatic of the proper chants are the gradual and the alleluia. While it may be said that they accompany the gospel procession and its antecedent blessings, they by far exceed the demands of time for these actions; as they stand, it is clear that they determine their own duration, and the ceremonial preparatory to the gospel occurs during them; for some of the duration of

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[18] As was the practice in the earliest manuscripts of the antiphonaries, as published in the *Antiphonale Missarum sextuplex*, and recently arranged for practical use in *Versus psalmorum et canticorum* (Tournai: Desclée, 1962).

[19] Additional verses for the psalmody at the introit are provided in *Versus psalmorum et canticorum*.

[20] In the papal liturgy represented by the *Ordines romani*, the introit is sung with an indeterminate number of verses while the entrance ceremonies take place; it is only upon the signal from the pope that the *Gloria Patri* is sung, bringing to an end the singing of verses; quite explicitly the duration of the introit is determined by the time taken by the ceremonies. Cf. Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani*, II, pp. 81–84.

[21] Also to be seen in the *Antiphonale Missarum sextuplex*, and available in *Offertoriale sive versus offertoriorutn*, ed. Carolus Ott (Tournai: Desclée, 1935).

the gradual and alleluia there is no other action. Of all the propers then, they are the most self-sufficient. They follow the singing of a lesson, and show the pattern of lesson and responsory also seen in the office; but the use of two successive chants, gradual and alleluia together, suggests something more. These chants create a musical cumulation which leads up to the singing of the gospel, the high point of the first part of the Mass.[22]

In the context of this general pattern, certain variations occur among the propers which subtly differentiate various feasts. For example, the graduals for the most solemn feast days can be slightly more elaborate, while the chants for the Common of the Saints are, as a whole, slightly simpler. This general frame of reference can serve in a few cases to create a sense of the uniqueness of one or another feast. The Mass for Christmas midnight, for example, has the gradual *Tecum principium*, one of the most elaborate of the mode 2 graduals;[23] yet the introit and communion are among the simplest chants of these types.[24] There is here a juxtaposition of solemnity and simplicity that memorably characterizes that unique Mass.

The propers of the Mass form musical accompaniments to other liturgical actions. There has been some suggestion that the people ought to sing these parts of the Mass, and the propers have often been replaced by the congregational singing of hymns. The question of the suitability of hymns aside, there is a strong reason that these parts of the Mass should be entrusted to a special schola. The music should aid the people's participation in the liturgical action itself. The propers, with the possible exception of the gradual and the alleluia, are not the action; the best way for the people to unite themselves with these actions is, in most cases, to observe them, unfettered by hymn books or the details

[22] The history of these chants and their function in the liturgy is interesting and important; it will be the subject of the second part of this article, to appear in a later issue of this journal.

[23] *Liber usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1956), p. 393; compare it, for example with *Haec dies*, for Easter, *Liber usualis*, p. 778.

[24] *Liber usualis*, p. 392, 395.

of reading musical notation. They can see the colors of the vestments and the hierarchical order of the participants of the liturgy; they can be moved by the rhythmic quality of the actions to contemplate the order being projected, and to realize that this order is a depiction of a sacred order, "a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City Jerusalem."[25]

The participation of the congregation is more appropriate in the Ordinary of the Mass. These parts themselves can be seen as the liturgical action. They accompany no other action, but in themselves constitute the acts of petition, praise, and belief. While most of their texts originate in scripture,[26] their complete shape is the result of their development in the liturgy. The *Gloria* and the *Sanctus* are described very early as hymns in the classical sense, the sung praise of God. The *Kyrie* and the *Agnus Dei*[27] are prayers of petition; they show traces of having been derived from a litany, and their melodic shape in Gregorian chant suggests the easy participation of the congregation in the words *eleison* or *miserere nobis*, since, while the beginnings of the invocations may differ, these words are frequently set to identical melodies.[28] The *Credo* constitutes a classical profession of Trinitarian belief.

It would seem that the parts of the ordinary, as the propers, ought to receive settings which would distinguish their functions, but in fact their stylistic differences do more to compensate for differences in the lengths of the texts, making each part of the

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[25] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 8.

[26] *Gloria*, Luke 2,14; *Sanctus*, Isaiah 6,3, and Matthew 21,9; *Agnus Dei*, John 1,29.

[27] It might be argued that the *Agnus Dei* is a chant which accompanies the breaking of the bread. This is not so in the missal in use before 1969. The *Novus ordo Missae* calls for the singing of the *Agnus Dei* at the breaking of the bread, and this is where it occurs in the *Ordines Romani*. Jungmann claims that the order of ceremonies at the *Agnus Dei* has always been a perplexing one, and that various orders occur in the history of the missal; it may be that the ideal order has not yet been found. Cf. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, II, 303–340.

[28] Richard Crocker, "Early Settings of the Kyrie eleison," *Abstracts of Papers Read at the Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological* Society, Dallas, Texas, November 2–5, 1972, p. 21.

ordinary more similar to the rest than the length of its text would suggest. The *Kyrie* melodies are the most melismatic, the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* are a medium stage, and the *Gloria* and *Credo*, the longest texts, are the most syllabic.

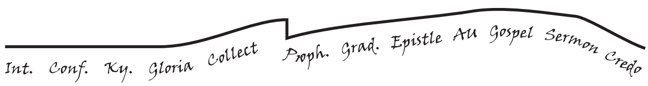
The Ordinary of the Mass provides the total liturgy with a different kind of order than do the propers. As the propers, the Gregorian cycles of the ordinary show an ordering from simple to complex, but this is not so much a difference of the individual parts, as it is a difference between whole cycles, and corresponds to the degree of festivity of the particular day; the most elaborate sets of chants for the ordinary are generally assigned to the higher feasts, the simplest to the ferial days.

The total order of the Mass, then, consists of interlocking cycles of priest's prayers and lessons, propers, and ordinary. These create a complex of parts which serves several different functions. On the most practical level it distributes the performance of the parts somewhat evenly, so that (contrary to the congregationally sung Mass in which hymns replace the proper) neither priest nor choir nor congregation must ceaselessly sing, but may rest their voices as another sings. On the aesthetic level, there is a complementarity of parts—each style complements and relieves the other. Parts in which words prevail are balanced by parts in which melody prevails. Parts which project a sense of motion are balanced by parts which are conducive to repose. Sound is even balanced by silence.

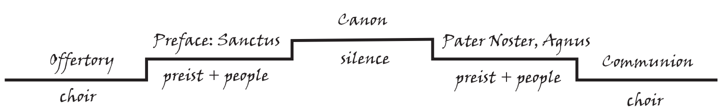
Most important, however, is the overall liturgical shape which these cycles create. The two main parts of the Mass, the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful, stand as parallel movements, each with its own sense of progression through significant parts to a high point. The high point of the Mass of the Catechumens is the gospel, the book which represents the words of Christ himself, and which is given priority of place; this high point is emphasized and prepared by the singing of the gradual and alleluia, and whereas the preparation is elaborate, the gospel itself is simple. Its words are proclaimed in a straightforward fashion, and yet by their position they receive the greatest honor and attention. The homily and the *Credo* which follow can be seen as an amplification and a complement to it. Thus its shape is as follows:



With the new scheme of three lessons, this shape is somewhat elongated, and the sense of climax slightly mitigated:



The Mass of the Faithful has two points of emphasis. Each is emphasized in its own way. Traditionally the silent canon forms the center, and, for one who has followed the action, a point of ineffable mystery; it is balanced by having a priest's chant followed by an ordinary movement on either side of it, and on either side of those is a proper chant:



That is one sort of symmetry, yet there is a climactic progression as well; the Lord's Prayer being the most elaborate of the priest's chants, it establishes an intensification that is an appropriate preparation for communion; on this basis, it might be diagrammed as follows:



The *Novus ordo missae* calls for a slightly different shape; since the canon is no longer silent, and the Lord's Prayer sung by all, a different emphasis is made; the sense of cumulation begins more slowly, and moves more directly to the communion:



This order (including the singing of the embolism), with its quicker alternation of priest and people before the communion may actually increase the sense of anticipation and of the worship of the Eucharistic presence, and thus be a more effective preparation of the people for communion.[29]

These structures are emphasized further by other aspects of ceremonial, such as the use of incense and the stance of the congregation. Incense is used four times during the Mass. Twice—at the introit and at the offertory—it begins each major part of the Mass by a ritual preparation, a blessing and consecration of the altar area. Twice—at the gospel and at the consecration—it emphasizes the high point of each major part by showing the honor due the Lord, first in the Word, and then in the Sacrament. Thus, incense articulates the beginning and the high point of each of the major halves of the Mass.

Likewise, the congregation stands at the gospel and the Lord's Prayer, at the priest's prayers, and at the parts of the ordinary. A change of stance can articulate the beginning of an important part, rising for the gospel, kneeling for the canon, and rising for the Lord's Prayer.

In a solemn high Mass, all of this is given an additional dimension of order in the division of functions between the sacred ministers; their relationships establish a sense of orderly service that represents another hierarchical feature.

Music can now be seen, on one level, as a shape-giving element in the Mass; it orders and differentiates the various liturgical acts, and so forms an integral part of the liturgical action. The foregoing generalizations are descriptive in nature, not prescriptive. Their purpose is to help sort out and understand one aspect of the complex levels of meaning in the Mass. They do not replace the

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[29] For this to work, the kiss of peace must be handled very carefully (the most careful treatment of all is to omit it, something seemingly allowed by the rubrics); the conversational handshake effectively disperses the attention and concentration which the music has supported at this point; if, in addition, the priest leaves the Blessed Sacrament at the altar to circulate among the congregation, the Eucharistic presence is ignored, and the effect of this build-up is thoroughly ruined.

many other levels of meaning, be they literal, theological, philosophical, mystical, or other. Nor should they be taken, except on the most general level of understanding, as a means of improving the liturgy.[30] Other shapes can exist; in fact, polyphonic music contributes quite a different shape to the solemn Mass. The shapes that are described here are not set forth as essential. What is essential is that there be shape.

This discussion has considered liturgical music partly from an aesthetic point of view, and has even considered the liturgy as a whole from an aesthetic point of view. Some would object that this is art for art's sake. I would answer that it is art for worship's sake. That it is art means that on the most spiritual level it does what it intends to do, as nearly perfectly and beautifully as possible. That it is worship means that the music is not an end in itself, but rather that it takes its place as an essential component of the liturgical action, defining and specifying its character and shape.

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[30] A common mistake, in the zeal to improve the liturgy, is to analyze a complex rite from one point of view, to take the analysis to be a satisfactory description of the meaning of the rite, and then to reform the rite so that it conforms better to the analysis. So stated, the fallacy is obvious, but the mistake is often made.

2

THE MUSICAL SHAPE OF THE LITURGY, PART II: THE INTERPOLATION OF POLYPHONIC MUSIC

The Second Vatican Council acknowledged the integral role of music in the liturgy. In the debate on the schema for the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the familiar designations of music as *ancilla* or *administra* were laid aside in favor of a stronger formulation; "a necessary and integral component of the solemn liturgy"[1] was approved on the floor of the council by a vote of 2087 to 5.[2] According to Jungmann, "music is not merely addition to and adornment of the liturgy; it is itself liturgy, an integrating element, which belongs to the complete form of the liturgy."[3]

While the council required that new forms introduced into the liturgy must somehow grow organically out of the existing ones,[4] it admitted all forms of true art provided they possess characteristics

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This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 102, no. 4 (1975).

[1] Article 112.

[2] Joseph Andreas Jungmann, "Konstitution über die heilige Liturgie, Einleitung und Kommentar," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil; Konstitutionen, Dekrete und Erklärungen, Lateinisch und Deutsch, Kommentare*, Teil I (Freiburg: Herder, 1966), pp. 95–96.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Article 23.

suitable to the liturgy. It encouraged composers to contribute new works to the treasury of sacred music.[5]

The purpose of the following article is to show that historically the interpolation of polyphonic music into the Gregorian Mass has realized these principles: at one and the same time, (1) it was an organic outgrowth of already existing practices; (2) it shaped and formed the progress of the sacred action; and (3) of the best artistic principles of its own time it used those which were suited to contributing to the overall musical shape of the liturgy. Two particular high points in the history of polyphonic music will be discussed, the organa of the Notre Dame school, ca. 1200, and the cyclic ordinary of the Mass, ca. 1500.

The presence of some kind of polyphonic elaboration of Gregorian chant is a consistent feature of the history of the liturgy from almost as early as the first notation of the chant melodies themselves. While the first additions to the chant were simply parallel fourths or fifths, a practice of counterpoint evolved, and a wide spectrum of means of elaboration has existed ever since.[6] In churches with modest means, this may have been quite simple music, which did little more than provide a harmonic context to some of the chants; organ accompaniments in recent times have served a similar function. This sort of amplification alters the overall shape of the liturgy very little. However, churches with well-established and well-supported musical organizations were the location of more extensive developments. They fostered musical works of genius, and they built great repertories which now

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[5] Article 112.

[6] The writers of music history have tended to emphasize the history of musical innovation, and sometimes have left the impression that successive new styles completely replaced older ones. On the contrary, while in some places new works for the liturgy prevailed, in other places, the older works formed the staples of the repertory. German manuscripts of the fifteenth century show pieces in a thirteenth century style; manuscript choirbooks copied in the late eighteenth century in Munich contain polyphonic works of the sixteenth century; Palestrina's music has been consistently sung at the Sistine Chapel, and certain works of Palestrina and his contemporaries have remained a part of a living repertory sung on quite a wide-spread basis.

take their place beside Gregorian chant as timeless and permanent parts of the treasury of sacred music, repertories which made their own contribution to the musical shape of the liturgy. Such are the Notre Dame organa and the cyclic Mass.

The organa of Leonin realize some basic principles of order and shape already present in the Gregorian Mass.[7] They constitute a polyphonic elaboration of the chants for the gradual and alleluia, an elaboration made on the basis of the responsorial division of the chant between cantors and choir. The performance of a Gregorian gradual—for example, *Haec dies*[8]—began with the intonation by the cantors, after which the choir continued and completed the responsory; the cantors then sang the verse, and the choir joined the singing of the last words of the verse with its melisma:

Responsory

Cantors - - - Choir -

Haec dies * *quam fecit Dominus, exsultemus et laetemur in ea.*

Verse

Cantors - Choir - - -

Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus: quoniam in saeculum * *misericordia ejus.*

It was a natural development for two cantors, presumably the most accomplished singers, to elaborate their prescribed parts; one would continue to sing the Gregorian melody while the other would sing a counterpoint to it. They were free to arrange their own elaborate versions of the chants assigned to them, while the choir sang its chant in the accustomed manner. This practice formed the basis for the alternation of polyphony and chant in the Notre Dame repertory.

Yet another feature of the Notre Dame organa derives directly from the chant. These elaborate pieces alternate two separate and

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[7] Cf. "The Musical Shape of the Liturgy, Part I: The Gregorian Mass in General," pp. 3–16, above.

[8] *Liber Usualis*, p. 778.

contrasting polyphonic styles which derive from a stylistic distinction in the chants themselves. The Gregorian graduals are characterized by a distinction between nearly syllabic and melismatic passages. Several syllables of the text are set to only a few notes after which a single word receives a long melisma. The relative independence of melisma is a mark of the highly musical purpose of these chants. In the polyphonic elaboration, separate and contrasting styles are composed for each of these Gregorian styles. Those parts of the original chant which are nearly syllabic receive a style known as *organum purum*; over a single note of the chant is placed a whole phrase of melody in the duplum. Those parts of the original chant which are the melismas receive a style known as discant; the several notes of the tenor are sung rhythmically while the duplum moves in a style congruent with them.[9]

Organum purum:



Discant:



Leonin's organum for *Haec dies* thus takes the following shape, showing relative lengths of the sections:

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[9] The examples are drawn from William G. Waite, *The Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony: Its Theory and Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 120–126; for another transcription of the same organum, see Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, Vol. I, *Oriental, Medieval and Renaissance Music*, Revised edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 27–30.

organum purum (soloists) -
Haec dies -

chant (choir) -
quam fecit Dominus: exsultemus et laetemur in ea. - - - - - -

organum purum (s.) - - discant (s.) - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Confitemini - - - - - - - - *Domino quo* - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

organum purum (s.) -
niam bonus: quoniam -
discant (s.) - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - chant (ch.)
in saeculum - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - *misericordia ejus.*

Something intrinsic to the basic Gregorian melody has provided a point of departure for a piece which greatly amplifies the total dimensions of the original chant.

Leonin's organa are based upon the fundamental chant melody; they are, however, thoroughly Gothic pieces. The chant serves as a point of departure for the projection of a large piece whose basic means of organization belong to Leonin's own time. He is thought to have composed at Paris, ca. 1160–1170;[10] the choir of the Abbey of St. Denis, generally acknowledged to be the first Gothic church, was consecrated in 1140, and the first extensive Summa theologica was probably composed sometime before 1190.[11] Thus his work falls directly into that period and location dominated by the birth and growth of Gothic architecture and scholastic philosophy.[12] What elements of the Gothic aesthetic are embodied in Leonin's organa? I suggest that Leonin based his works upon a Gothic sense of order which was (1) hierarchical, (2) systematically rational, and (3) highly elaborated.

The Gothic sense of the order of things was strongly hierarchical; civil and ecclesiastical society were both arranged in well-developed hierarchies with higher and lower nobilities and commoners,

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[10] Waite, *Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony*, p. 5.

[11] Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1957), p. 92.

[12] Ibid., has shown that parallels between Gothic architecture and the methods of scholastic philosophy in the area around Paris in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries demonstrate a unified aesthetic that can be called Gothic.

higher and lower clergy and laity, each person having a clearly defined position and function in the society. The organization of bodies of knowledge was classified hierarchically in books, chapters, sections, and subsections, each in its proper place within the overall scheme of things.[13] For Leonin and for composers of the entire Middle Ages, a clear hierarchical relationship between the voices of a composition existed. Usually the tenor was the prior voice; being derived from a Gregorian melody, it represented a traditional *datum* which bore the weight of authority and resided in the weightier long notes upon which the style was based. It was analogous to the statements of the fathers and doctors at the beginning of a disputation or to the texts of the scripture which were the subjects of extensive glossing.

The Gothic sense of the order of things was highly reasonable and reasoned. While faith remained largely unquestioned, the relationship of faith and reason was newly defined. There was a greater confidence in the ability of reason in attaining to the knowledge of truth and in the capability of human intelligence in the ordering of divine knowledge. The highly organized upper parts of the organa show the increased role of the developed use of reason in musical compositions. Even the Gregorian tenor itself, the traditional *datum*, was now given a rationalized organization.

The Gothic exercise of reason was highly organized and systematic. The process of reasoning was organized by the syllogism, a three-member sequence of propositions whose conventions and restrictions precisely articulated the development of a proof.[14]

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[13] Cf. ibid., p. 32; he points out that this method of outlining was the invention of scholasticism.

[14] There is a curious parallel between two senses of the word organum. Etymologically the connection seems rather remote, but the analogy which the two senses suggest could hardly have been overlooked in the scholastic age. The Greek (*οργανον*) means basically an instrument of the work a man does. For a musician, it is a musical instrument, for a thinker it is a system of logic. Artistotle's treatise on logic is named *Organon*; in its complete form it was introduced into the West precisely in the twelfth century. Among other things, it treated of the syllogism. The elaborate musical compositions of the Notre Dame school were called *organum* by the application of an already traditional term for

The rhythm of a musical piece was also based upon a schematic and rationalized organization, the system of mode and ordo. Mode designated one of six individual rhythmic patterns, analogous to the foot of poetry, and resolved to a triple organization; for example, mode one (trochaic): ♩♪; mode three (dactylic): ♩.♪♩. Ordo described the grouping of these patterns into phrase units; for example, in mode one, ordo one: ♩♪♩𝄾; ordo two: ♩♪♩♪♩𝄾; ordo three: ♩♪♩♪♩♪♩𝄾. While this system of modal rhythms became more rigorously organized in the thirteenth century, it was already present in Leonin's organa, particularly in the discant sections.[15]

The medieval mind was concerned with elaboration. It was indeed the function of reason to develop extensive commentaries upon a circumscribed and well-known text. The text was a point of departure for a work of reason of immense proportions. Consider the sermons on the *Song of Songs* by St. Bernard of Clairvaux; his expositions run to eighty-six sermons, some of them lengthy,[16] and he reached only the third chapter of his text. Analogously, the extended clause of duplum over each tenor note represents such an elaboration.

If the organa were constructed in a Gothic way, they also gave a characteristically Gothic shape to the liturgy. Elaboration functioned to emphasize a hierarchical order among the parts of the liturgy. In the Mass of the cathecumens, the singing of the gospel was the liturgical high point;[17] this was prepared by the musical high points of the gradual and alleluia, and extended by the sequence. There is a directional ordering of movement in the liturgy which is accelerated and heightened by the elaboration of gradual and alleluia in organum. This typically Gothic shape might be expressed as follows:

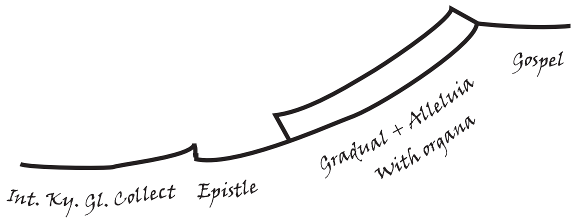
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two-part polyphony, probably because it imitated the sound of the musical instrument, the organ, which may have been played in two parts. Yet in contrast to the old style of two-part pieces, these new, highly structured pieces suggest something of the sense of a method of logic.

15 Cf. Waite, *Rhythm of Twelfth-Century Polyphony*, pp. 13–55.

16 They occupy 575 pages in the new collected editions; S. Bernardi, Opera, ed. J. LeClercq, C. H. Talbot, H. M. Rochais, Vol. I, II, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* (Romae: Editiones Cisterdenses, 1957, 1958).

17 Cf. the present article, Part I, pp. 13–14, above.



The cyclic Mass of the Renaissance provides a contrasting example. Setting the five movements of the ordinary of the Mass each to similar music creates quite a different musical shape. Yet this was also an outgrowth of certain principles of order already to be found in the developed Gregorian Mass. It has already been noted that the Gregorian settings of the ordinary tended toward an equalization of the lengths of movements.[18] But can the five Gregorian movements be said to bear some unity among themselves which constitutes a precedent for cyclic treatment in polyphonic music?

The basic unity among the movements of the Gregorian ordinary is one of liturgical association; just as the propers for one feast belong together, so do those chants for the ordinary which bear a common rubric which provides that they be sung on a day of a particular sort.[19]

There is also some musical unity among chants of the Gregorian ordinary, especially between *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* movements. The chants of the modern Roman *Kyriale* illustrate this: in ten of the eighteen cycles, the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* are in the same mode; in addition, some of these pairs show the use of the same melodic material, particularly those of Masses I, IX, and XVII.

The pairing of *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* chants may have suggested a pairing of polyphonic movements; however, the development of an integrated five-movement cycle progressed in several

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[18] Ibid.

[19] E.g., *de Apostolis, de Martyribus*, etc. The fact that these chants were not placed together in the manuscripts has caused scholars to overlook their basic association with each other by being prescribed for use on the same day.

further stages. These stages have been chronicled by Manfred Bukofzer as a prelude to his study of the Masses based upon the "Caput" tenor.[20] On the one hand, pairs of movements were based upon a unifying motto beginning, and such pairs were grouped together to form superficial cycles. On the other hand, individual movements and the pairs were composed upon a borrowed melody placed in the tenor. Because the organization of the tenor integrated the shape of the movement strongly, these pairs showed a more pervasive unity, and led more strongly to the unification of all five movements.[21] The first extant complete five-movement cycles were written by Leonel Power and possibly John Dunstable, both Englishmen.

While the cyclic treatment of the movements of the ordinary is based to some extent upon already existing precedents, it is thoroughly a creation of the Renaissance. Several elements of Renaissance aesthetics contribute to the cyclic Mass: (1) the sense of proportions, (2) the juxtaposition of differences, (3) the function of commonplaces, and (4) the integration of a symmetrical form as a whole.

A hallmark of the Renaissance art and architecture is that it is based upon pleasing proportions. Medieval works, to be sure, used proportional structures, but these were often complex and hidden. For something to be pleasing it must be seen, and the Renaissance treatment of proportion was to make its perceptibility an objective. Thus, the proportions used tended to be the simpler proportions, especially the duple, the triple, and the sesquialtera (2:3). The pleasing proportions of a room might be that it is half again as long as it is wide (sesquialtera). A general application of the theory of proportions was seen in the theory of harmony, and may have

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[20] "Caput: A Liturgico-Musical Study; I. The Origins of the Cyclic Mass," in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York: Norton, 1950), pp. 217–226.

[21] These first tenors, although liturgical melodies, did not belong to the Mass, but were antiphons from the Office. Such use of a Gregorian melody, however, was nothing unusual, since it was clearly adopted from the well-established practice of the isorhythmic motet, a form which ultimately traces its history back to the discant sections of the organa of Leonin.

resulted in the adoption of a normative four-voice style. However, a more specific application is found, especially in cyclic Masses, in proportions of tempo. Mensurations, the signs which prescribed meter, also indicated a proportional relationship one to another, a relationship which was measured by a common unit of time called a *tactus*. This resulted in the creation of different, but proportional tempi. Each movement of a particular Mass might begin with a mensuration which called for a slow triple meter, move to a fast duple, and conclude with a fast triple or sesquialtera. Since these tempi were measured against a common beat, they were truly proportional, and they created within each movement a progression of tempi, a clearly audible proportionality.

The Renaissance artist was interested in the meaningful juxtaposition of diverse ideas. For example, a painter might express the stature of a contemporary by depicting him as an ancient. Cranach's painting "Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg as St. Jerome,"[22] is a typical depiction of St. Jerome, showing him in his study, sitting before a book, vested in the cardinal's scarlet, with the lion and other animals at his side; but this figure of St. Jerome has the features of the Cardinal von Brandenburg. All of the attributes of St. Jerome are thereby applied to the artist's patron. The use of a *cantus firmus* in a Mass may be seen to be similar. Dufay's *Missa Ave regina coelorum* is based upon the Marian antiphon; each movement uses the melody of this antiphon in the tenor. It has recently been suggested that this Mass was written for the consecration of the Cambrai cathedral to Our Lady.[23] Thus, while each movement of the Mass served to set its respective text, the whole Mass expressed, in addition, the devotion to the Queen of Heaven, just as did the church built in her honor.

The Renaissance was a time when the art of rhetoric was cultivated by every learned man. An important rhetorical concept was that of the commonplace. A commonplace was an idea expressed by a saying which was well known to knowledgeable

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[22] E. Ruhmer, *Cranach* (London: Phaidon, 1963), pl. 21.

[23] Alejandro Enrique Planchart, "Guillaume Dufay's Masses: Notes and Revisions," *The Musical Quarterly*, LVIII (1972), pp. 21–23.

men, and which implied a context of values and meanings. A speaker had but to mention the commonplace and it called to mind for his hearers the whole complex of ideas; he had something in common with them, a basis for a sophisticated argument. Often the *cantus firmus* of a cyclic Mass served as a commonplace. It was a tune that had been used before, and was used again because the composer could assume that his listeners had heard it before, that it would be heard intelligently. The tune *L'homme armé* served as such a commonplace, being the *cantus firmus* for over thirty cyclic Masses.[24]

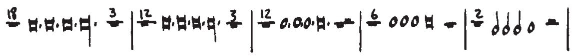
The Renaissance artist was concerned that his work be unified by a form which in some respect projected a sense of balance and symmetry. Although the surface of the work might be a proliferation of detail, the detail was organized by an underlying shape. In many works of the visual arts the development of perspective provided a basis for this shape. Each object was shown larger or smaller depending upon how far it was from the viewer. Perhaps the organization of the tenor of a *cantus firmus* Mass represents an analogy to perspective. Consider the tenor of Obrecht's *Missa super Maria zart*; it creates a kind of perspective by placing the same basic motive under different mensurations, each statement being progressively shorter. For example, the section *Et resurrexit* is based upon the following notation of the tenor part:[25]

[24] The Renaissance practice is sometimes criticized in which Masses were written upon secular compositions; lately it is rather cited as a precedent for the introduction of certain base styles of music into the liturgy. It must be emphasized that while the function of such incorporation into a Renaissance Mass may have been to ground the work in something familiar, the process of incorporating it was to transform it thoroughly by the context of the contrapuntal sacred style. Thus a Renaissance *cantus firmus* Mass properly makes sacred a secular element. The current practice reverses the priorities; the introduction of thoroughly secular styles untransformed secularizes the sacred action.

[25] Jacobus Obrecht, *Opera Omnia*, Editio altera, *Missae, VII. Maria Zart*, ed. M. van Crevel (Amsterdam: Vereeniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1964), pp. 33–36.



This prescribes the following succession of rhythms:



Such schemes of progressive diminution create a strongly unified movement.

The basic process of placing five somewhat equal polyphonic movements within the context of the Gregorian Mass creates a certain liturgical structure:

Int. | Kyrie | Gloria | Ep. Grad. All. Gos. | Credo | Off. Pref. | Sanctus | Pt. No. | Agnus | Comm.

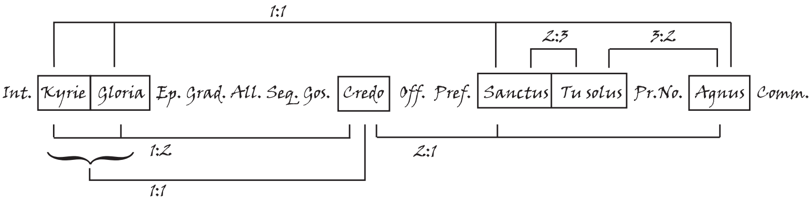
The polyphonic parts are placed at intervals throughout the service, and with the exception of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria*, are interspersed with other elements of the service. This creates a kind of rondo effect, in which the same basic material recurs after contrasting elements. The movements of the polyphonic ordinary served as the pillars of the unification of the whole service. When the organization of the individual movements is a strong one, such as in a scheme of progressive diminution of the tenor, or in the repetition of the same sequence of tempi in each movement, a clearly repetitive structure is projected. This unification can take the form of movements whose durations are proportionate. For example Josquin's *Missa D'ung aultre amer*,[26] including the elevation motet, has the following measure lengths:

Kyrie	49	*Sanctus*	48
Gloria	48	*Tu solus*	70
Credo	108	*Agnus Dei*	53

Whatever the theorists of recondite proportionality may say about these numbers, the approximate durations of the movements are

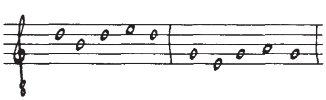
[26] Josquin Des Près, *Werken, Missen,* Deel II (Amsterdam:Vereeniging voor Nederlandsche Muziekgeschiedenis, 1950), pp. 121–141.

evident: the unit of 48 measures is basic; the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and *Sanctus* are quite alike in duration; the *Agnus Dei* is just a little longer. The *Credo* is approximately double the length of these movements, and the motet bears a proportion of just a little less than 3:2.



While the Renaissance sense for balance and unification may result in a certain equalization of the movements of the Mass, there is also a subtle progression of emphasis through the five movements. The *Kyrie* is a movement with a relatively short text; it can set forth in a clear manner the materials of the cycle. The *Gloria* and *Credo* both have extended texts, and their setting involves the composing of the basic materials to suit the extensive texts. By the completion of the *Credo*, the basic musical materials have been used three times; the hearers have become sufficiently familiar with them to comprehend some subtle differences of treatment in the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, which place a special emphasis on these movements. These differences of treatment take several forms; a few examples will illustrate the principle.

Pierre de La Rue's *Missa Cum jucunditate*[27] is a Mass based upon a *cantus firmus* consisting of a small figure stated at two different pitch levels:



Its total range of notes consists of only a pentatonic scale and is marked by the absence of any half-steps. This is the basis of a

[27] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 1783, fol. 99'–111, and many other sources; for a complete listing see Jozef Robyns, *Pierre de La Rue, Een Bio-Bibliographische Studie* (Brussel: Koninklijke Belgische Academie, 1954), pp. 156–157.

certain bright-sounding harmony which characterizes the first three movements. The *cantus firmus* is then given for the *Sanctus* by a canon over the five note figure:

Canon: descende gradatim



It calls upon the tenor to state the subject on successively lower scale degrees:



While this sort of canon may seem obstruse from the point of view of the singer, it is most effective and perceptible for the listener, since it permits the introduction of harmonies not yet heard in the three previous movements. Based upon material already familiar, this canonic treatmeant casts a new light upon this simple melody and places a profound emphasis on that movement sung during the canon of the Mass.

Jean Mouton's *Missa Alleluia*'[28] is typical of a number of Renaissance Masses in which proportionate tempi do not organize each movement. Rather the *Kryie*, *Gloria* and *Credo* are written in the common *tempus imperfectum diminutum* throughout. Only in the *Sanctus* does the undiminished mensuration appear; the half-tempo which this prescribes places an emphasis on that movement, an emphasis created by a slow and majestic tempo.

Yet another sort of treatment of the *Sanctus* sets it off from the rest of the movements: it was sometimes the occasion for the interpolation of an elevation motet.[29] The Missa de Sancta

[28] Ed. Paul Kast, *Das Chorwerk*, Heft 70 (Wolfenbttel: Möseler, 1958).

[29] Although it is not found frequently, this elevation motet is undoubtedly the result of a liturgical tradition rather than the choice of the composer. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite* (tr. Francis A. Brunner; New York: Benziger, 1955), Vol. II, p. 216, cites a decree of 1512 issued by Louis XII, that at the daily high Mass in Notre Dame in Paris, the *O salutaris hostia* be sung at the elevation of the host

Anna[30] of Pierre de La Rue has such a motet in its *Sanctus*. The first *Osanna* is simply replaced by a homophonic motet, *O salutaris hostia*:

a4	a3	a4	a2	a4
Sanctus.	*Pleni.*	*O salutaris.*	*Benedictus.*	*Osanna.*

It occurs in a symmetrical position, at the exact center of the movement, which coincides with the time of the elevation. The juxtaposition of its lauda-like familiar style with the contrapuntal style of the rest of the movement underscores its devotional character and the symmetrical construction of the movement, and thereby sets the *Sanctus* off from the rest of the movements of the Mass. Josquin's *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia* is a similar lauda-like elevation motet which replaces the entire *Benedictus* and *Osanna*, and creates a less symmetrical, more directional kind of emphasis.

Yet another way to emphasize one of the final movements is to introduce certain contrapuntal intricacies. It is a characteristic of many of the Masses of the later sixteenth century that the *Agnus Dei* has an additional voice, and that the additional voice is in strict canon with another voice. The cumulative effect of the addition of a voice is intensified by the fact that upon the fifth

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between the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*; he cites many other instances as well. The *Kyriale* of the modern Cistercian order contains three chants for the elevation, *O salutaris hostia*, *Ave verum corpus* for Marian feasts, and *Pie Jesu* for Requiem Masses, each in exactly the same position as the Eucharistic acclamation of the *Novus Ordo Missae; Kyriale seu Ordinarium Missae* (ex Graduali Cisterciensi) (Westmalle: Typis Cisterciensibus, 1933). All of these practices, of course, derive from the medieval *Sanctus* tropes, such as that found in Guillaume Dufay's *Sanctus Ave verum*, *Opera Omnia*, Tomus IV, *Fragmenta Missarum*, ed. Heinrich Besseler (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1962), pp. 45–48. The *Pie Jesu* of the Fauré *Requiem* follows this practice also, replacing the *Benedictus* and *Osanna*; in the absence of a sequence, it is sometimes sung in the place of the *Dies irae*, of which it forms the final verse; but it is clearly an elevation here.

30 Pierre de La Rue, *Drie Missen; Monumenta Musicae Belgicae*, VIII, ed. René Bernard Lenaerts et Jozef Robijns (Antwerp: Vereeniging voor Muziekgeschiedenis, 1960), pp. 49–72.

statement of the material of the Mass, the hearers are familiar enough with it that they can hear and appreciate this special treatment.

Thus the cyclic Mass in the Renaissance sets up five similar movements serving as pillars of a balanced and proportional structure, but in addition it uses special devices to underscore the liturgical importance of either the *Sanctus* or *Agnus Dei*, the former more in the period around 1500, the latter more toward the end of the sixteenth century. In this way it can be said to be intimately connected with the liturgical action.[31]

It has been argued that the Renaissance cyclic Mass, while growing out of existing practices makes use of several elements of an aesthetic characteristic of the Renaissance to give the liturgy a particular musical shape. Does this argue against its use in sung Masses today? I think to the contrary. At least those elements which have to do with the internal organization of the work, proportion, unification of structure, symmetry, and emphasis, are desirable characteristics of any work of art. The council admitted all works of art which were suited to the demands of the liturgy, and so it seems they are particularly appropriate.

As with any fine work of art, the Renaissance Mass is the product of a culture—to be a living thing, it must take its place in a context of other fine things. Dare one suggest today that this context must be that of the devoted care of the liturgy and of the spiritual life as a whole? Dare one ask that as much care go into preaching as into the preparation of music? Dare one ask that ceremonial be the object of rehearsal as is singing? In order to be a living thing it must also take its place as something regularly practiced. One performance a year of a polyphonic Mass, while a laudable endeavor and an enrichment of the liturgy, risks being removed from the context of a familiar practice, and being seen as

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[31] These two kinds of emphasis realize the two possible shapes of the canon described in the first part of this article, p. 14, above. It is likely that the *Agnus Dei* was sung well into the communion time, so that in a polyphonic Mass it would underscore the final element of the second diagram.

an exceptional or even esoteric happening.[32] For this reason, large city and university churches[33] whose liturgies can be devoted to the special polyphonic repertories are an essential aspect of our religious culture, to be fostered as the council directed, in order that great works of the polyphonic art remain available as intrinsically connected with the sacred action.

[32] On this ground, revival of the singing of Notre Dame organa in the liturgy might be ill-advised, given the uncertainty of the transcriptions, and, as yet, the unfamiliarity of the style. I would not categorically rule out their use for special congregations with the proper preparation.

[33] I am reminded of the liturgical music culture of the city of Munich, Germany, which I experienced during the year 1966–67 as a foreign exchange student. I believe the pattern there has not changed much since then. The downtown Jesuit church had a Sunday high Mass with orchestra using the repertory of Haydn through Gounod. The Dominican church sang an *a capella* Mass of the generation of Palestrina and Lassus. Once a month the Capella Antiqua sang a Mass from the repertory before the high Renaissance. A chant Mass was always sung at the Benedictine abbey. At the cathedral, the high Mass included works from most of these categories from time to time, as well as Latin and German Masses of the twentieth century. All of these were sung in the context of more or less complete singing of Gregorian propers and congregational responses.

3

THE MUSICAL SHAPE OF THE LITURGY, PART III: THE SERVICE OF READINGS

Music gives the various liturgical acts of the Mass each a characteristic style; at the same time, it articulates and expresses its overall shape. This is the sense in which Gregorian chant is intimately connected with the liturgical action;[1] this is one reason the Second Vatican Council declared Gregorian chant to be the normative music of the Roman rite.[2] The musical shape of the Gregorian Mass as a whole was the subject of the first part of this article.[3] On the grounds that the living tradition is the best school of the liturgy, the Gregorian Mass as traditionally practiced until the council was essayed, and the reforms subsequent to the council were evaluated as they brought about an alteration of this shape.

As a general principle, the parts of the ordinary of the Mass constitute various liturgical actions in themselves, while the propers serve to accompany other actions, specifying through music the character of these actions. However, this description is inadequate

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[1] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 112.

[2] Constitution, Art. 116.

[3] "Part I: The Gregorian Mass in General," pp. 3–16, above.

for one group of chants—the gradual, alleluia, and tract. They far exceed the small amount of ceremonial which takes place during their singing. They can be seen as a musical complement to the lessons which precede and follow them. Yet from their earliest history, they have been considered self-sufficient parts of the service of readings, and in fact they are the most extensive and elaborate chants of the Mass. They deserve closer attention, both in their musical function and their relation to the rest of the service, both in their history and in their practice.

This is particularly important, since one of the options of the new missal is to eliminate these chants, replacing them with what is called the responsorial psalm. While the missal states that the chants of the *Roman Gradual* are the first choice and this responsorial psalm is second, the liturgical books printed in this country, whether official books for the celebrant and ministers, or hand missals of various sorts for the laity, give only the responsorial psalm.[4] Thus, the gradual has gone the way of the Roman canon, and has been effectively replaced by the second choice,[5] and this on the grounds of restoring an earlier and more authentic practice.

How does the history of the service of readings establish a precedent for this replacement, and what does it show about this service when sung with Gregorian chant from the *Graduale Romanum*? What conclusions can be drawn for the practice of the liturgy? First a few principles concerning the nature and the use of historical knowledge will be established. Then a sketch of our knowledge of the early history of this part of the Mass will be made. On this basis an interpretation of the shape of this service and of the functions of its various parts will be essayed. Finally some practical solutions will be suggested.

History is not a science in the sense that the natural sciences are. The natural sciences proceed by reasoning and experimentation to determine laws which have a universal validity. There is

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[4] In spite of the requirement that periodically issued hand missals should contain all of the options, I have seen no "missalette" which includes the texts of the gradual and alleluia from the *Roman Gradual*.

[5] Even in sung Masses of some solemnity these have become the norm.

little question that under similar circumstances, similar results will be obtained, since the general validity of the law is understood.

History, on the other hand, deals with facts and events and the explanation of their causes. Its primary knowledge is factual, and beyond the extant documentation, the facts cannot be further determined by experiment. The events of history are often the result of the most disorderly concurrence of causes, causes which can no longer be isolated and tested or verified. Among the causes must be included the exercise of the free choice of the human will, the results of which cannot be reduced to confirmable law.

Further, the knowledge of any particular event is at the mercy of the vicissitudes of time, since the documentation can at best be partial, or worse, fragmentary. The knowledge of the causes of historical events is contingent upon the preservation of the documentation; but it also depends upon the imaginations and viewpoints of modern interpreters. For the ancient and medieval periods, the sparsity of documentation is such that the discovery of new facts may radically alter the state of knowledge, and may spark a new interpretation which is diametrically opposed to older ones. The history of liturgy and its music is no exception, and the interpretations of the liturgists and musicologists are sometimes highly speculative at best, or worse, in the service of misconceptions or even polemical purposes.

One of the greatest difficulties in the history of the liturgy is that for a certain period only the texts survive. Priest-scholars, accustomed to reciting the office from the breviary and saying low Masses, understandably have been most interested in the history of the texts, and much liturgical scholarship does not get beyond it.[6] Nevertheless, a liturgical rite is an integral act in which the elements of music, gesture, vestments, and the like play a decisive role, and relate one to the other in specific ways. Some liturgical actions are definitely determined by their texts; for others, the

[6] The special historians of music, architecture, etc. have their own limitations of point of view.

text is almost an afterthought. The task of the historian of the liturgy, then, must include the synthesis of all of the significant elements in an understanding of the total rite.

What documentation is there of the liturgy and its music from the first millennium, and what conclusions can be drawn from it? The first stage of documents consists of incidental mention of psalm or hymn singing and of the lessons upon which sermons were based, and record of the official institution of specific practices.[7] Two sorts of mention of singing are of interest; (1) there are occasional references to singing "in a melodious tone,"[8] and to ornate methods of singing;[9] both of these are from the Eastern church. There are occasional mentions of the singing of psalms before the gospel in the sermons of St. Augustine (354–430).[10] This seems to have included a response repeated by the people, at least in some cases. For four of these St. Augustine cites the texts of the refrains.[11] Curiously, only one of the texts cited by Augustine occurs in the Gregorian repertory, on Wednesday of Passion week. St. John Chrysostom (d. 404), however, cites two psalm refrains, which must have been well known in the Eastern church: "Haec est dies quam fecit Dominus," on Easter Sunday, corresponding to the same text for the gradual for Easter Sunday universally sung in the Western church; and "Oculi omnium," also found in the earliest Gregorian repertory.[12]

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[7] For a chronological listing of documents through the sixth century, see Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1958), pp. 38–42.

[8] Eusebius, cited in Gustave Resse, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York: Norton, 1940), p. 62.

[9] Cassian, cited in Peter Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, I: Ursprung und Entwicklung der liturgischen Gesangsformen bis zum Ausgange des Mittelalters*, Dritte Auflage (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1911; reprinted, Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), p. 33.

[10] See W. Roetzer, O.S.B., *Des heiligen Augustinus Schriften als liturgie-geschichtliche Quelle* (Munich, 1930).

[11] See Bruno Stäblein, "Graduale (Gesang)," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, V (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1956), col. 637.

[12] Stäblein, "Graduale (Gesang)," col. 636–637.

St. Augustine documents the division of roles in the service of readings in the following way: "audivimus apostolicam lectionem . . . , audi psalmum . . . , audistis et evangelium;" "we have heard the epistle, I have heard the psalm, and you have heard the gospel."[13] The conjugation of the verb articulates the parts of a long sermon in which the three parts of the scripture receive commentary successively; it designates obliquely the assignment of the epistle to another reader, the psalm to the congregation, and the gospel to the preacher. Nevertheless, the choice of the verb places the emphasis upon hearing rather than doing.

The introduction of specific pieces into the liturgy is often documented. For example, Gregory the Great (590–604) is said to have extended the alleluia to the whole year except for Lent.[14] There seems to be no record of the specific introduction of the gradual or the tract, and they have often been assumed to have been an inheritance from the synagogue by way of the Christian church in Jerusalem. The presence of the two texts given by St. John Chrysostom in the Gregorian repertory suggest some specific link to the popular responsorial psalmody of the East; on the other hand, the absence of most of the texts given by Augustine raises the question of the continuity between accounts of popular responsorial psalmody and the graduals of the Gregorian repertory.

It might be objected that this argument bases itself only upon the continuity of the texts, and in a time when the texts were not fixed, this does not necessarily disprove a continuity of musical practice. That may be so, but there is no direct extant evidence of the continuity of the musical practice at all, and so the asserted relationship of popular responsorial psalmody and the Gregorian repertory remains unproven.

The next stage of documentation consists of a series of liturgical books for the services. The *sacramentaries* contain the prayers of the celebrant of the Mass. The earliest manuscripts date from the seventh century, but some are thought to contain

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[13] Sermo CLXX (de Tempore, 49), *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 38, col. 926–933.

[14] Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, I*, p. 87.

material dating back to the pontificate of St. Leo I (440–461).[15] *Lectionaries* contain the texts of the lessons to be sung; these date from the seventh century on, with contents going back as early as the fifth century; they show that much of the Roman cycle of readings was fixed toward the end of the sixth century.[16] *Ordines* are books with specific rubrics for the services; while they give no specific texts, they prescribe in detail the course of the service. They are the earliest sources for the specific rubrics for the singing of the graduals and alleluias. The oldest of them dates from ca 700;[17] by this time the gradual and alleluia are intoned by the soloist, and the choir sings the respond. *Cantatoria* are books with the specific texts of the gradual, alleluia, and tract; they provided the texts to be sung by the cantors. The earliest of these is from the late eighth century.[18] *Graduals* without melodies, showing all of the proper chants, date from the beginning of the ninth century.[19] Both these books show a fixed order of texts, but yet no record of the specific melodies. *Tonaries*,[20] provide lists of the proper chants, grouped according to mode. The earliest of them is dated circa 800. These books document the use of specific texts, and the designation of mode is a witness to some musical continuity with notated chant repertories.

The first sources which give any musical notation date from the very end of the ninth century and from the beginning of the tenth. They are graduals and antiphonaries written in staffless neumes,[21] and while they provide no pitch notation, comparison

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15 See Henry Ashworth, O.S.B., "Sacramentaries," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XII (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 792–800.

16 See Emil J. Lengeling, "Pericopes," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XI, pp. 129–138.

17 Their complete texts are edited and published in Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut Moyen Age*, 5 vols. (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1931–1956; reprinted 1960–1965).

18 The Gradual of Monza, published in René-Jean Hesbert, ed., *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex* (Bruxelles: Vromant, 1935; reprinted, Rome: Herder, 1967).

19 Several published in Hesbert, *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*.

20 Michel Huglo, *Les Tonaires: Inventaire, Analyse, Comparaison* (Publications de la Société Française de Musicologie, 3e série, 2; Paris: Heugel, 1971).

21 Several are published in the series *Paléographie musicale* (Solesmes: Imprimerie Saint-Pierre, 1889–1937; reprinted beginning 1955).

with later notated versions verifies that they are essentially the same melodies. At the beginning of the eleventh century the pitches are identified in one manuscript by alphabet letters placed beside the staffless neumes;[22] other manuscripts give lines to the neumes, definitely prescribing the pitches,[23] and it is only a short step to the square notation by which the chants are still notated.

Thus, there is certain documentation of precise melodies only from the end of the ninth century. It is assumed that these are not newly composed melodies, and that there is a considerable continuity of melodic tradition, perhaps back to the time of Gregory or before. However, the existence of another whole repertory of chants for the Roman liturgy, now called old Roman chant,[24] whose melodies are slightly simpler but obviously closely related, raises the question of whether there was some systematic reworking of the repertory which produced the chants we now call Gregorian. Some scholars place this event in the Carolingian empire, and rather late.[25] Bruno Stäblein has proposed the third quarter of the seventh century in Rome, and gives convincing arguments for this.[26] In any case, there are no extant melodies which surely represent the responsorial psalmody mentioned by the Fathers.

The tentative nature of the conclusions which can be drawn from this material might best be illustrated by citing three conventionally held viewpoints, and demonstrating how recent

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[22] *Le Codex H. 159 de la Bibliothèque de l'École de Médecine de Montpellier* (XIe siècle): *Antiphonarium tonale missarum*, *Paléographie musicale*, Vol. 7, 8 (Solesmes: Imprimerie Saint-Pierre, 1901–1905).

[23] Several of these are also published in *Paléographie musicale*.

[24] An edition of this repertory is found in Margareta Landwehr-Melnicki, ed., *Die Gesänge des altrömischen Graduale Vat. lat. 5319* (Monumenta monodica medii aevi, II; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1971); it contains an extensive introduction and discussion of the repertory by Bruno Stäblein. A general introduction to the repertory in English by Robert Snow is found in Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, pp. 484–505.

[25] For example, Richard Crocker, *A History of Musical Style* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), chapter 1.

[26] Bruno Stäblein, "Die Entstehung des gregorianischen Chorals," *Die Musikforschung*, XXVII (1974), 5–17.

scholarship has suggested revision of them. These three concern the biblical precedents for the alleluia and their survival in the liturgy, the structure of the lessons and chants in the early liturgy, and the nature of the practice of melismatic psalmody.

It has been thought that the responsorial singing of the alleluia was prescribed in the very texts of the psalms themselves, for a number of psalms give "alleluia" either at the beginning of the psalm text, or at the beginning and end. Where it is not given at the end, it is taken for granted that it is to be sung at the end. Thus, the present method of singing the alleluia—alleluia, psalm verse, alleluia—is viewed as a survival of that practice. Ewald Jammers, in his recent study of the history of the alleluia,[27] has pointed out that there are rather two different indications in the book of psalms. One is for the last few psalms of the psalter, Ps. 147–150, and includes an alleluia at the beginning and the end of the entire psalm. They are the psalms assigned to Lauds, an example of which is found in Ps. 150 of the Lauds of the Easter Vigil of 1956.[28] The greater number of psalms consistently show an alleluia only at the beginning; these are the Hallel psalms, 104–106, and 110–117. This manner of performance is also to be seen on Holy Saturday. The alleluia of the Mass is intoned by the priest and repeated by the people (on Holy Saturday, three times, each time on a higher pitch); the first verse of Ps. 117 is sung (recalling the *Haec Dies*), followed by the whole Ps. 116. The alleluia serves to announce the beginning of the psalm. The only response is the immediate response of the people. Given the historian Sozomen's account that the alleluia was sung in Rome only on Easter,[29] this is most likely the sole surviving alleluia which shows a continuity with the responsorial practice of the scriptures. Jammers points out that the continuity suggests even the Last Supper, when the Hallel psalms would have been sung. How ironic it is in view of this information that the new *Graduale*

[27] *Das Alleluia in der gregorianischen Messe, eine Studie über seine Entstehung und Entwicklung* (Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen, Heft 55; Münster: Aschendorff, 1973), pp. 30–39.

[28] *Liber Usualis* (1956), p. 776kk.

[29] Jammers, *Das Alleluia*, p. 10.

Romanum prescribes that the alleluia be repeated at the end of the psalm verse, and the complete psalm 116 is omitted. In order to restore a hypothetical primitive practice, the only surviving example of the real practice is altered.

A common conception which has been claimed as precedent for the new lectionary is that there were three readings in the early church, one from the Old Testament, an epistle and a gospel, and that the two chants were placed one after each of the first two lessons. Upon closer scrutiny, the historical precedents fall apart however. Emil J. Lengeling, in his article "Pericopes" for *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*,[30] summarizes the historical documents for the order of the lessons. It seems clear that the sequence Old Testament, epistle, gospel was never a consistent feature of the Roman rite. Certainly by the time of the extension of the alleluia to the whole church year, the sequence of lessons was clearly fixed at only two. The evidence cited for the separation of the chants is the ember days, when several lessons are sung, each followed by a chant. These are special cases, however, like Holy Saturday, where the pattern is that of vigils and not of the Mass, and they cannot demonstrate what the pattern might have been for other days. Further, on festive occasions, when three lessons are found, for instance on Christmas (still to be found in the Dominican liturgy), the two chants still follow together upon the second lesson. It is true that other rites had more than two lessons, many more, but the pattern of three lessons with the two chants separated is insufficiently documented.

A third example is a more general one: the nature of the chants in melismatic psalmody. It has always been understood that the graduals, alleluias, and tracts were pieces which were passed on by oral tradition. Further, the excellent analyses of the process of centonization made by Ferretti[31] have shown the formulaic character of the chants. Yet the function of formula in the context of oral tradition has not been understood. By oral tradition it has

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[30] *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XI, pp. 129–138.

[31] Dom Paolo Ferretti, O.S.B., *Esthétique grégorienne* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1938).

been assumed that the innumerable pieces have been passed on note for note, and retained by a monumental feat of memory. It has been suggested that the reason the chants were notated was that they had become, by a process of gradual development, too elaborate to be remembered. The corollary of this is that they are now overly elaborate and ought to be simplified.

Leo Treitler, in two recent articles,[32] has attempted a more thorough understanding of the nature of oral transmission by emphasizing the fact that oral transmission is tied to the formulaic nature of the pieces. He applies concepts of the formulaic and communal composition and oral transmission of a work which were developed by scholars of middle European and Homeric epic poetry.[33] The formulaic process allows the repertory to be seen in simpler terms. Each piece is the unique application of that set of formulae to the particular text at hand. Given this understanding, the process of melismatic psalmody makes sense as a manner of delivering the various psalm texts to be sung by a soloist. The continuity of this practice with Hebrew practice suggests its antiquity. Although the precise form of the extant pieces may not antedate their fixation in notation by very much, the soloistic and formulaic process in the pieces is undoubtedly quite old.

This argues strongly against Gelineau's thesis about the gradual chants — that they are overly elaborate, and must be reduced to the simplicity of a psalm tone.[34] The currently widespread singing of the responsorial psalm to the psalm tones of the office, then, is totally unhistorical. The characteristic tones of melismatic psalmody suit soloistic delivery. The office psalm tones suit common choral recitation of the psalms. To transfer the tones of

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[32] "Homer and Gregory: The Transmission of Epic Poetry and Plainchant," *The Musical Quarterly*, LX (1974), pp. 333–372; and " 'Centonate' Chant: *Übles Flickwerk or E pluribus unus?*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXVIII (1975), pp. 1–23.

[33] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[34] Joseph Gelineau, S.J., *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, translated by Clifford Howell, S. J. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1964), pp. 193–199 and p. 161.

the office psalms, whose function is to allow a simple delivery in choir for the individual singer as prayer, to the gradual of the Mass, whose function is the melodious delivery of the psalms to listeners, is a drastic and utterly fundamental error of the confusion of quite different purposes.[35]

There is another issue concerning the history of the responsorial psalm and the people's participation in it. The practice of the early church is held up as a model of popular participation, and the singing of the gradual chants by the choir as a corrupt, late practice, which robs the people of their rightful share in the singing of the Mass. Yet the telling of the whole story casts a different light upon the matter. The simple fact is that at the time when the popular participation in the responsorial psalm is documented, the Mass commenced with the first reading. There was no introit, Kyrie, or Gloria. All that the people had to sing was one paltry response at the psalm! A Gregorian Mass today, in which the people sing the ordinary and the choir and soloists sing the propers, favors the people much more. What the people sing is more substantial, is conducive to a more stable practice, and can make use of much finer music.[36]

There is yet a further twist. In the hope of restoring an ancient practice, an entirely new one has been created. Now that the texts of the responses and the verses have been printed, so that the

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[35] It is always amusing to reflect upon the incongruity of hearing the psalm tones of the office used for the gradual at Mass. Is this the result of all the reforms of the Council, and the consummate product of liturgical scholarship? Most church musicians have known this practice for a long time, but considered it a stopgap; it used to be called "Rossini propers."

[36] I have been present at a service in which the introit was replaced by a hymn, the *Kyrie* was sung in English by the people, the *Gloria* in Latin by a choir, and the responses to the psalm by the people in English; both the Kyrie and the psalm response were set to such impoverished melodies that one could truly say that they had not been set to music—it conferred no solemnity upon the rites; it added no delight to prayer. If the people are going to sing, it must be music which they sing; this is for two reasons: (1) technically, poorly written material is *more* difficult to sing, and (2) the singing of *Ersatz* music cannot possibly provide the edification of true music, because that edification comes *intrinsically* from the beauty of the music, not just from the fact of doing it.

parishes will burst forth in song, what do they do? They obediently recite the texts without melody. A new genre has been created—recited psalmody, more exactly, spoken song.[37] This is something hitherto unknown in the solemn services of the Roman rite; it is as if a Protestant church were to speak the texts of the hymns without tunes. The obvious absurdity of the latter suggests what the defect is in the former: a musical practice cannot be created by prescribing a set of texts and hoping someone will set them to music. Text and music in the liturgy have always grown up together; pieces have always been assigned to the liturgy as total text-music entities. This is true for the psalms in the office, this is true for the hymnody of the Protestant churches, this is true for the graduals of the Mass. It would have been better to have paid closer attention to those authentic pieces we have than to grasp at the straw of the non-existent congregational responsories.

What can be understood of the existing Gregorian repertory as a received practice, illuminated by historical and analytical information? The first purpose of the study of its history should be to understand the nature of the existing traditional practice; the first purpose of analysis should be to understand how it actually works, to reflect upon its elements and their relationships, and in fact, to embody these understandings in the performance of it. This will now be essayed for the service of readings.

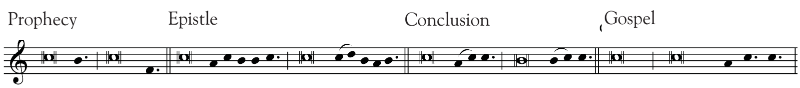
The gospel forms the high point of the service of readings. Each part of this service is given a musical setting which at once specifies and furthers its own function, and at the same time plays a role in leading to the gospel as the high point.

The singing of the service as a whole provides the musical basis upon which the difference of styles becomes apparent. The smooth movement from part to part is easily accomplished. In addition, while the singing of all of the texts leaves room for inflection and declamation, its elevated tone suits the dignity of the solemn service, and preserves the declamation of the texts

[37] It is true that Protestant churches have practiced the "responsive psalm," and this may have suggested it to the reformers, for ecumenical reasons. This is a false kind of ecumenicism, for one of the greatest things we have had to offer the ecumenical dialogue is the beauty of our liturgy.

from idiosyncratic, arbitrary, and exaggerated styles of emphasis.[38]

While all of the lessons are from the scriptures, all of the books of the scriptures are not alike, and the tones used for the singing of these lessons differ in certain respects as the books differ. These tones distinguish three kinds of lesson, the prophecy, the epistle, and the gospel:



Durandus[39] distinguishes Old Testament lessons from New, and points out that, while the cadences of the Old Testament lessons descend, those of the New Testament rise. Further, as I have pointed out, there is a certain harshness in the tone for the prophecy by the juxtaposition of the tritone in the two cadences, and something of the character of prophecy in the trumpet-like interval of a fifth.[40] I have recently observed that when this tone is sung in a resonant church, it is the half-step downward cadence which also has a harsh quality; the recitation tone grows and rings full upon repetition, and lasts through the singing of the half step below it, creating an internal cadence which is somewhat dissonant; the opposite effect can be observed at the final cadence, and in fact, the lower note of the fifth can be perfectly tuned to the over-ring of the upper, resolving the sense of dissonance created at the mid-cadence. These features are probably not consciously noticed in the hearing of the lessons, yet when given some attention by the singer, they can enhance the singing of the prophecy.

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[38] For instance, I have observed the words of the consecration said variously "This *is* my body," or "*This* is my body," or "This is *my* body," certainly a distraction.

[39] Herbert Douteil, CSSp, *Studien zu Durantis "Rationale divinorum officiorum" als kirchenmusikalischer Quelle* (Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung, LII; Regensburg: Bosse, 1969), p. 79.

[40] Cf. the present article, Part I, p. 9, above.

The epistle tone has a persuasive, rhetorical quality that the others do not have; this is because it makes more use of the cadence of the text, that pattern of accents which closes the clause or sentence. The cadence is one of the most important elements in the rhetorical delivery of a text. This is particularly so in Latin, where the qualities and kinds of cadence are thoroughly and carefully controlled by the authors. Each cadence consists of two accents, each with one or two unaccented syllables following. These accented syllables which constitute the acknowledged articulation of a Latin phrase receive a musical definition which is melodic enough to add a pleasant and persuasive quality to their delivery. The working of these cadences is partly due to the periodic construction of a Latin sentence—it is end-oriented; that is, words essential to the meaning occur at the end of the sentence; the important words and the emphasis of the musical cadence coincide. The form and the content thus reinforce each other, and the integrity of the thing is beautiful.[41] The termination has a finality that is given a strong emphasis by the use of an alternate recitation tone which reverses the movement of the other final cadences: in the body of the lessons, c ➤ b, at the termination, b ➤c. Often this corresponds well with the final sentence of the lesson which can be a strong summarizing line or a concluding exhortation.

The gospel rightly deserves the position of honor among the lessons. It represents a culmination of all that was in the Old Testament, and the rest of the New Testament is its application. But it is more than that. On a literal level, it records the very words of the Lord which He spoke. On a figurative level, moreover, the liturgical presentation of the gospel constitutes the presence of Christ Himself, the Word, Him whose mere Word is sufficient unto salvation, as the faith of the centurion recounts in the gospel, "say but the word . . . ," and as the communion prayer reiterates. It is perhaps due to this unique sufficiency of the Word

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[41] Unfortunately, the adaptation of this tone to English is problematic; the English cadence is less regular and well-defined than that of the Latin, and the cadences are sometimes clumsy. English is, further, a language that is less periodic—its most important stresses come in the midst of lines; the coincidence of cadence and stress does not happen, and the integrity of the thing is threatened.

that the tone for the gospel is the simplest, allowing for the most direct delivery of the very words which are the words of salvation. The high honor due to these words in the liturgy comes about by their being placed at a point of culmination, and while they themselves remain simple and direct, the liturgical activities which surround them constitute a setting in which they themselves hold the place of honor. Thus the crown into which the highest jewel is set is the context of chants and ceremonial. Let us consider first the chants, both in themselves and as they contribute to the whole shape, and then the ceremonial.

Just as the liturgical use of the lessons recognizes different functions in the tones to which they are sung, so also the tones to which the psalms are sung recognize the unique character of that book. Whereas the lessons discussed above have the support of music in their delivery, the psalms are more essentially musical pieces. They are in their very origins the texts of liturgical music. Their received texts include titles, now unfamiliar to us, which are understood to have named the tune to which they were to be sung. While the melodies to which they are sung have undergone development and revision, they are now, nevertheless, the normative melodies to which those psalms are to be sung. There are different melodies according to the liturgical use of the psalm, which range from simple recitative to elaborate melisma.[42] Whereas in the Mass, the psalmody generally accompanies another action, this is not quite so for the gradual chants. They must be seen as more than accompaniment.[43] In fact their use in the Roman liturgy of the classical period illustrates that they constituted something like a reading out of the scripture. Before the time of Gregory the Great, the singing of the gradual was reserved to deacons, on the same grounds as was the singing of the gospel

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[42] See William Peter Mahrt, "Gregorian Chant as a Fundamentum of Western Musical Culture," pp. 94–97, below.

[43] The German term *Zwischengesänge*, intervenient chants, is in this context certainly inadequate. Perhaps the term "gradual chants" might better express their function, since they were all originally sung from the step, and their function might yet be said to be that of a step-wise culmination to the gospel.

—the reading of the scripture was the function of the ordained clergy.

This has been understood by some scholars of the liturgy, who have yet made the mistake of taking the text alone as constituting the liturgical act. For them to read the psalm text is sufficient to fulfill its liturgical function. Yet the history does not bear this out. In spite of the early inclusion of a people's refrain, the psalm verses were sung by soloists; indeed the tracts, whose pre-Vulgate texts attest to the continuity and antiquity of their practice, constitute solo singing of the verses only, without response. That this singing achieved a degree of elaboration must be taken for granted, and that by the time of Gregory, they were elaborate melismatic chants, as we know them now, though perhaps not in the final form in which we know them. Gregory the Great released the deacons from the duty of singing these pieces; he wished them to be chosen for their piety, and not for the beauty of their singing.[44] His action has an interesting corollary: he thereby acknowledged the difficulty of the chants, and their desirability, and by his act he authorized their continuance. They remained the province of the minor clergy, and their character as lessons was thereby retained.

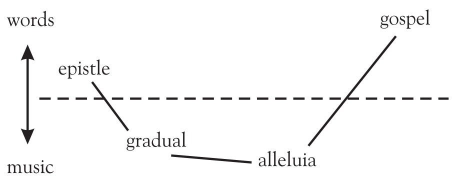
That the extant repertory of Gregorian gradual chants has a primarily musical function can be confirmed by analysis of the pieces. They show a feature not found to such an extent in any other of the chants; this is the marked use of end-melisma. In the tone for the epistle, the accent of the text determines the location of the few points of melodic movement; this is essentially true for the psalmody of the office as well. The principle can be seen in the other chants for the Mass, though to a lesser degree. The gradual, however, consists of any number of departures from the text in the placement of long melismas upon the final unaccented syllable. This is not for want of syllables, for the very melisma may be preceded by the recitation of several syllables on a single note.

If the gradual is characterized by such melismas, the alleluia is constituted by them. The jubilus, the long melisma on the final

[44] Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, I,* (n9), p. 87.

"—a," is the most characteristic feature of the alleluia, and it is sung not once, but usually three times. These musical elaborations over the text and even away from the text are the glory of the Gregorian repertory and have their own proper function in the liturgy. While the contemplation of the literal sense of text is a part of hearing them, the hearer may be allowed to depart from that sense and be moved by the sheer sacred affect of the music. They are firmly rooted in the texts of the psalms, but they flourish far above the ground of that meaning.

This is the function of these chants, and while they are justified in themselves as creating a contemplative and sacred affect, they form a complement to the lessons as well. There is a subtle progression in the service which moves between more and fewer words:



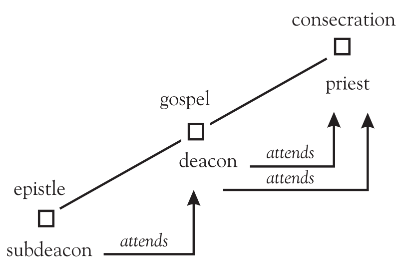
The most wordless piece is that which precedes the Word itself, and constitutes the best possible preparation for it. In the context of the gradual and alleluia the words of the gospel are fresh, the mind is at rest but attentive. There is a receptivity which is in the most spiritual sense of the word an excellent psychological preparation for hearing the Word.

Historically the gradual chants were themselves subject to expansion and elaboration. Ordinations were given between the gradual and alleluia (suggesting the alleluia is more a preparation for the gospel than a complement to the preceding lessons). From the repeat of the alleluia the sequence developed; from within the gradual and alleluia the polyphony of the Notre Dame era grew. In Germany vernacular hymnody developed as a paraphrase of the sequence, and the hymn *Christ ist erstanden* was sung immediately following the sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*. Bells were sometimes rung at the sequence, and the sequences themselves formed the point of departure for liturgical dramas. For the most part, these developments were eliminated after the Council of Trent,

but they are symptomatic of the impulse to expand that already climactic portion of the service.

In addition to these musical elements, the whole context of ceremonial supports the pre-eminent position of the gospel. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this is the way in which the rank of the clergy reflects a hierarchical relationship between the parts of the Mass. The two parts of the Mass as a whole can be seen as each culminating in a central act, which is in a special way the presence of Christ. The first is the gospel, where Christ is present in his own words. The second is the consecration, where He is present in His Body and Blood. The sacramental presence is the greater, and it is effected by the priest. The presence in the gospel is the lesser and is preparatory to the sacramental one; its minister is the deacon. By this hierarchical assignment of ministers, the relationship between these two parts of the Mass is characterized. The relationship between the two lessons within the service of readings is reflected similarly; the sub-deacon reads the epistle—a lesser ranking minister reads the minor lesson.

These relations are made more visible by the fact that the lesser minister attends, or accompanies the higher. Thus, the sub-deacon sings the epistle essentially by himself, while the deacon and priest remain in their places. The deacon then sings the gospel, attended by the sub-deacon, while the priest remains in his place. For the Mass of the Faithful, the priest goes to the altar, and he is attended by both the sub-deacon and the deacon:



This sort of relationship would not be clear if the deacon did not sing the gospel, or if a minister of lesser rank did not sing the epistle. In fact, it was central to these two orders, since the rite of conferring the sub-diaconate included the presentation of the

book of epistles, and that of the diaconate, the gospels. There was, then, a specific reason for the order of sub-deacon; it was a liturgical one, and its ability to set a kind of third dimension to the ranking of the clergy gave the solemn Mass considerable shape.

The relationships among the ministers at a solemn Mass is one which is projected and clarified by movement. It has been fashionable recently to claim a role for dance as a liturgical art, on the scanty precedent of David's dance before the Ark or certain extinct customs of the Mozarabic rite, and then to experiment with expressionistic para-liturgical dancing, either at the gradual or the offertory. Now dance is an art which orders bodily movement to a purpose; but the liturgy already has its arts of movement. These are the orderly movements of the ministers and the acolytes; they involve certain fixed formations, configurations which differ for each part and differentiate it from the others. The motions are largely those of moving from position to position, though some are purposeful motions in themselves. Incensation is one of these; its rhythm is regulated on the lowest level by a well-known measure of time, the pendulum. The censor can be swung only with a regular motion, and this motion is very carefully choreographed in the books of rubrics. While no steps for the feet are prescribed, the motion of the censer is, and the priest's other motions follow it naturally and rhythmically. The motion of the individual is thus clearly delineated.

The motion of acolytes is another matter. It would not do for them to march in step, and, in general, the music to which they move is committed to other purposes than helping their movement. Rather, the movement of acolytes is simply controlled by symmetry. They are deployed in pairs, and in general they move two-by-two, symmetrical to the central axis of the sanctuary or to some other focal point. I have observed a single acolyte serving Mass, and have been dismayed at how amorphous and purposeless his motions seemed, only to have him joined by a second, who moved in complementary fashion to him, and the combined motion was orderly and beautiful. Symmetry is an essential feature of the delineation of sacred space. When motion is added to symmetry there is a delineation of a sacred action. These motions are not the highly cultivated steps of a ballet, just as the singing of the

lessons is not the highly articulated recitative of opera; rather, they are ordered to the shape and purpose of the whole. For all the talk by the theorists of opera of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a synthesis of the arts, this had already been going on for centuries in the traditional liturgy.

The location of the singing of the gospel contributes to its pre-eminence. The history of this place is somewhat complicated, but it was essentially a matter of finding a rationale for considering what might conventionally be considered a pre-eminent place. The final solution was to the right of the celebrant as he faced the congregation. This is a practice which still has a secular significance in seating honored guests at the head table of a banquet to the right of whoever presides. In churches which were "oriented"[45] the gospel side was the northern side, and an additional significance was attributed to this location: the North represented the cold territories of the unconverted, to whom the gospel must be addressed; thus it was sung facing slightly northward.[46]

In the liturgy of the *Ordines Romani*, the gospel was sung from an ambo, a kind of pulpit with several steps leading up to it.[47] The progression to the gospel was made clear by reading the epistle from a lower step, singing the gradual and alleluia from the higher step, but yet not the highest, and only the gospel from the top of the ambo. This gave the psalmody sung upon the step (gradus) its name, gradual.

A kind of progressive elevation is given even to the gradual itself, according to Durandus, when the entire responsory was repeated. The repeat of the responsory was to be sung by the choir at a pitch a step higher than the first time.[48] This is seen today in the progressive elevation of the alleluia on Holy Saturday.

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[45] That is, it is situated so that the congregation and the priest, as they face the altar, face east.

[46] Joseph Andreas Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, tr. Francis A. Brunner, 2 vols. (New York: Benziger, 1951, 1955), I., 411–419, discusses this history in detail.

[47] See Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, I*, p. 86 for an illustration of an ambo.

[48] Douteil, *Studien zu Durantis*, pp. 90–91.

A distinct location for the singing of the gospel provides the occasion for a procession to the place. The procession is preceded by the deacon's receiving a blessing from the priest, and saying his own preparatory prayer. The procession is accompanied by acolytes bearing candles and incense. The gospel book is incensed, and signs of the cross are made; the book is held for the deacon while he sings the gospel. The congregation stands as a sign of honor to the presence of the Word, just as one stands when a distinguished person enters a room. The book is venerated by the deacon upon completion of the reading.

All of these ceremonial activities set the gospel as the high point and give it a place of honor. In turn similar ceremonies honor the Eucharistic presence of Christ, and some are more extensive, setting the Eucharist as worthy of even greater honor. The two ceremonies take a formation appropriate to their different characters: at the gospel the motion and the formation is basically in the direction of proclamation, whether it be facing the congregation directly or partly northward. At the consecration, the motion is altar-ward and the formation suggests a more hieratic order.[49] They are accompanied by the following: (1) candles, two at the gospel, six at the consecration; in each case the candle is a sign of the presence of Christ; (2) incense, more frequent at the consecration; (3) a person of higher rank performing the consecration; (4) each is the occasion of a tone of simplicity in the midst of complexity, silence, in the case of the consecration; (5) if the people kneel, each is accompanied by a change of stance for the congregation; the kneeling is a more notable change, since it is used for the first time in the Mass at the consecration.

What alterations to this pattern are to be found in the *Novus Ordo Missae?* The question of language aside for a moment, there are two significant ones. One is the addition of the third lesson and the interspersing of the gradual and alleluia chants between

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[49] Mass "facing God" is still a legitimate option, and perhaps expresses the different emphasis of the consecration better than that facing the people; the basic impulse is an upward one, and the whole action of the canon is addressed to the Father, a form of address which is suitably emphasized by a motion and a focal point which directs the attention upward.

the lessons. While the historical precedents for this are largely unacceptable, the practice as a simple innovation has something to be said for it. The duration of the service is lengthened a little, and the sense of climax is mitigated somewhat by separating the gradual and alleluia; however the movement from prophecy to epistle to gospel creates its own sense of progression through the three levels of those readings. The overall effect is to make the service of readings a bit more weighty and a bit less agile.

The other is the reordering of the tracts during Lent and Holy Week, particularly those for Holy Saturday. Much of the reordering of the pieces of the *Roman Gradual* seems arbitrary and useless; nevertheless, with some exceptions, it does not affect the shape of the service, since like pieces are exchanged for like. For Holy Saturday, the assumption seems to have been that all of those pieces based upon the mode-eight tract melody are interchangeable. Thus the new *Roman Gradual* calls for seven canticles in the tone of the mode-eight tract, one of them borrowed from the depths of Lent. This overlooks several essentials of this service. It was a vigil service; four canticles were sufficient even when there were twelve lessons. Further the accustomed four canticles were a special application of that tract melody: they were called *cantica*, not *tractus*. The slight difference is reflected in the fact that they are the simplest use of these melodies, eschewing anything but the main melodic formulae; their verses are somewhat shorter than many mode-eight tracts. With the background of having heard the longer and somewhat heavier tracts for the whole of Lent, these pieces take on a certain motion and familiarity that suits the unique Easter vigil. The insertion of too many pieces, or of some of a different character tends to make that portion of the whole service much too ponderous, and it thereby loses some of the anticipatory joy and motion which it formerly had. This can be easily remedied, since the rubrics call for chants from the *Roman Gradual* or other suitable songs; clearly the older usage of these tracts is preferable, and they are therefore to be taken as the other suitable songs, and can be used where they always have been.

The question of language poses a greater dilemma. The use of Latin for the lessons seems to be preempted by ecclesiastical legislation, even though the people may have translations at

hand. Two other solutions have been used, each with its problems. One has been the solution at the Church of St. Agnes in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the Mass can be sung in Latin outside of the lessons. Here as well, the eloquent reading of experienced lectors and clergy compensates for the lack of a sung tone. There is, however, some loss of continuity, and the festive character of the solemnly sung gospel. The other solution is to attempt to sing the lessons in English. This has been the solution at St. Ann Chapel in Palo Alto, California, where a pastoral fiat left no choice but to have a Mass thoroughly mixed in language. The absence of the continuity provided by music was destructive to the shape of the service. The singing of the lessons in English was thought to be strange at first, and for some it remains so. Likewise, it must be admitted that the epistle tone is not entirely satisfactory. However, the continuity and balance of the service as a whole has been thereby saved; the sung gospel takes its place as the culmination of the service of readings.

Finally, let us suggest some practical applications. The distinction between the gospel and epistle sides should be maintained. The Old Testament lesson ought to be read from the epistle side.

Where possible, in the solemn form of the Mass, three ranks of clergy should be used; the deacon should sing the gospel, and a deacon or vested lector the epistle. The difference of the Old Testament lesson from the epistle might be shown when a deacon sings the epistle by having the prophecy read by a vested lector.

A procession should be made to the gospel, including candles and incense. It should be timed carefully to arrive at the place where the gospel is sung as the repeat of the alleluia is completed.

The lessons ought to be sung, especially the gospel, even if it be to a simple recitation tone. If the lessons of a solemn Mass are not sung, at least the foresight of Father Jungmann in predicting the use of the vernacular over twenty years ago ought to be observed:

> . . . the liturgical reading cannot long remain on the level of a prosaic recitation that looks only to the congregation's practical understanding of the text. The

> performance must be stylized, much in the same way as . . . for the priest's oration. The reader must never inject his own sentiments into the sacred text, but must always present it with strict objectivity, with holy reverence, as on a platter of gold. This can be done by avoiding every change of pitch—the tonus rectus.[50]

Care should be taken, in exercising the option of choice of versions of the scriptures. The liturgical proclamation of the scriptures demands the use of good English. The available versions should be compared for each pericope and judged on a long term basis; the historic versions should be included in this consideration. Ultimately, one version might be chosen and used consistently. On the other hand, one version might excel in the translation of a certain kind of book, and another in another. In any case the temptation to make a cento of several versions, taking the reading of one here, another there, should be resisted. A further consideration might be whether the congregation has a translation in the form of a missalette. Following a translation while another is being read is a certain distraction, and the benefit of the alternate translation must outweigh the potential distraction in the disparity with the one at hand.

Since the reading of scriptures is in some respects an exercise of the teaching authority of the Church, it is best if the lessons be read by someone in orders, or in his place, by someone who has been delegated, and whose delegation is shown by being vested in some fashion.

For certain churches or certain more solemn occasions, additional sequences might be sung. The rubrics of the *Novus Ordo Missae* require only three sequences[51] but admit others as optional. They must be chosen carefully, since among the vast number of sequences there is some divergence in quality.[52]

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[50] Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 409.

[51] *Victimae paschali laudes, Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and *Lauda Sion*.

[52] Not many are readily available in modern edition, though some are found in the Solesmes publications, *Cantus selecti* and *Variae preces*.

There are certain things to be avoided in the service of lessons. Avoid improvised, *ad hoc* solutions. Things must be weighed carefully and well practiced. The usage ought to be consistent from week to week. In the long run, erratic liturgical practices damage the credibility of the liturgy.

Avoid carrying the book in procession held high above the head. The Roman rite has its own manner of carrying the book, and that is at chest height. The practice of carrying the gospel book held high is borrowed from the Byzantine rites, where it belongs to the entire context of the rite. There the book and the priest have been behind the *iconostasis*, or icon screen, and have not been visible; it is a kind of manifestation there, and carried by a priest very solemnly vested.

Avoid *Ersatz* music. The mere writing of something in musical notation does not make it music. Even the simplest music must be judged by canons of liturgical art: does it confer solemnity upon the rites? Does it add delight to prayer?

4

THE MUSICAL SHAPE OF THE LITURGY, PART IV: THE FUNCTION OF THE ORGAN

The Second Vatican Council clearly and emphatically stated the importance of the organ in the sacred liturgy:

> In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.[1]

It likewise gave music, of all the arts, the most central position in the liturgical action:

This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 104, no. 4 (1977).

[1] *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Article 120. This statement is a refinement of that of Pius XII in his encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (1955): "Among the musical instruments that have a place in church the organ rightly holds the principal position, since it is especially fitted for the sacred chants and sacred rites. It adds a wonderful splendor and a special magnificence to the ceremonies of the Church. It moves the souls of the faithful by the grandeur and sweetness of its tones. It gives minds an almost heavenly joy and it lifts them up powerfully to God and to higher things." *Papal Teachings: The Liturgy*, selected and arranged by the monks of Solesmes, translated by the Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), pp. 486–487.

> Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action.[2]

The intimate relation of music to liturgical action in the case of Gregorian chant was explored in the first part of this series of articles.[3] Instrumental music, however, has often been the subject of suspicion on the part of the fathers of the Church[4] and in the pronouncements of the popes of more recent times.[5] Further, the Eastern Church has traditionally admitted only vocal music, and the pope's own Sistine Chapel claims a long tradition of exclusively unaccompanied singing.[6]

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[2] Art. 112.

[3] "The Musical Shape of the Liturgy, Part I: The Gregorian Mass in General," pp. 3–16, above.

[4] Cf. Théodore Gérold, *Les Pères de l'église et la musique* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie Alascienne, 1931; reprint, Genève: Minkoff, 1973), pp. 123–134; and James W. McKinnon, "Musical Instruments in Medieval Psalm Commentaries and Psalters," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXI (1968), pp. 3–12.

[5] Cf. St. Pius X, Motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903), in *Papal Teachings: The Liturgy*, p. 185; and Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus* (1928), ibid., pp. 251–252.

[6] The term *a cappella* has not always meant simply unaccompanied vocal music; in the seventeenth century the term was commonly used to distinguish choral music (in which the instruments may have doubled the choir parts) from concerted music (in which instruments played independent parts written specifically for them). Recent research, however, has shown that the unaccompanied practice of choral music was the norm in Italy in the fifteenth century; cf. James Igo, "Performance Practices in the Polyphonic Mass of the Early Fifteenth Century" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1971), and Frank A. D'Accone, "The Performance of Sacred Music in Italy during Josquin's Time. c. 1475–1525," *Josquin des Prez: Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference . . . June 1971* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 601–618; further, the unaccompanied practice of the Sistine Chapel was actually the model for at least one cathedral in the north, that of Cambrai; it seems to have been a pattern that singers who were trained as boys in the northern cathedrals would have careers as singers in the Sistine Chapel, and would then return to their home cathedrals as canons to supervise the singing there; Guillaume Dufay is one of the most illustrious of such singer-canons; cf. Craig Wright, "Dufay at Cambrai: Discoveries and Revisions," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXVIII (1975), pp. 175–229; the role of the polyphonic vocal music of this practice in the liturgy was the subject of the second part of

Is the music of the organ to be seen merely as a concession to human imperfection as Cardinal Cajetan did,[7] or is there a more positive sense in which it can be called genuinely sacred music? In terms of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, can music for the organ be said to be intimately connected with the sacred action?[8] To answer this question, I propose to examine some features of the use of the organ in history and a few excellent compositions for the liturgy to see what roles the organ can play, and in what ways it can support or contribute a musical shape to the liturgical action.

The use of the organ in the history of the liturgy will be examined both for its general significance and also for the particular liturgical functions it serves. First, however, two constant features in which liturgical organ playing is distinguished from other liturgical music will form an essential background for this discussion: (1) its relation to texts, and (2) the importance of improvisation.

The Gregorian music for the liturgy, even in its most developed and elaborate state, has its roots in its texts.[9] The earliest layers of chant are settings of texts from the psalms, and the normative status of these melodies derives precisely from the fact that they are the Church's traditional usage of the book of liturgical texts from the scriptures. The parts of the ordinary of the Mass constitute the express liturgical acts of petition, praise, and confession of belief, and have their specific meanings in their texts;

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this article, "The Interpolation of Polyphonic Music," pp. 17–33, above.

[7] "The use of the organ . . . is . . . lawful, because one must regard the faithful who are still carnal and imperfect;" quoted by Benedict XIV in his encyclical letter *Annus qui* (1749), *Papal Teachings, The Liturgy*, p. 58.

[8] It must be admitted that in this century the state of "liturgical" organ music has not always been very high. "Theatrical" music, such as Wagner's March from *Lohengrin* or Franck's *Panis Angelicus*, were sanctimoniously condemned and forbidden, and white lists were published providing approved compositions. These white lists, however, were filled with pieces which were pale imitations of the "forbidden" pieces, and expressed the same sentiments, but not as well.

[9] Cf. William Peter Mahrt, "Gregorian Chant as a Fundamentum of Western Musical Culture," pp. 94–97, below.

some are elaborations of scripture texts,[10] and have a validity by this derivation. Organ music, however, pronounces no text, and therefore cannot take the role of being the prescribed liturgical music that the chant does. Thus, its role and its closeness to the liturgical action might seem to be restricted to that of an adjunct to the essential parts of the service. There is, however, a sense in which the organ carries the text. This derives from the general musical principle that a unique and memorable melody calls to mind its text immediately and inescapably. Our common experience of such a phenomenon may be limited to a few patriotic hymns; at least for such tunes as *America* or *The Star-Spangled Banner*, the playing of the tune brings its text to mind without any effort of recall on the part of the hearer, and forms the means for the hearer to identify with and even meditate upon the sense of the text. Thus, when the organ clearly plays a well-known sacred melody, its text is present to the intelligent and devout listener. The prescription found in medieval liturgical books that a melody is to be carried by the organ is *cantabitur in organis* (it shall be sung upon the organ), or even *dicetur in organis* (it shall be said on the organ), and it acknowledges this function of implicitly bearing the text. Must we assume that a medieval listener had such familiarity with the vast repertory of plainsong that it could all be played upon the organ? Not quite, for the organ usually took the most familiar texts and melodies, and frequently texts which actually include some repetition—those of the ordinary of the Mass. Moreover, the listener's orientation in the text was maintained by the regular alternation of the organ with the choir, verse by verse. At the peak of its development, however, organ music constituted the setting of a great deal of the chant. Hans Rosenplüt's description of Conrad Paumann, the blind organist, shows the extent to which one organist was able to play upon the plainsong and the identity which the pieces he played retained:

> Response, antiphon, introit,
> Hymn, sequence and responsory
> He plays as if by memory

[10] Ibid., pp. 98–99.

In improvisation or set in counterpoint . . .
His head is such a gradual
With measured songs in such number
It seems as if God himself has written it there.[11]

The art of the organist was essentially an improvisatory one. The history of organ playing is a history of the elaboration upon existing models and of the writing down of pieces which have already been played in improvisation. Notated pieces are often meant as didactic examples not just to be played, but also to be imitated in the performance of like pieces. Among the earliest extant pieces of liturgical organ music are short settings of the beginning of a chant which is understood to have been played completely.[12] They can only be the notated examples of how to begin a piece, written down to serve as a model for the improvisation of a whole work.

Two of the largest collections of pre-reformation organ music, the *Buxheim Organ Book*[13] and the *Fundamentbuch* of Hans Buchner[14] include didactic treatises which deal with questions of organ playing *ex tempore*. The works included in Buchner's treatise are pieces mainly for four feasts, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost,

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[11] Respons, antiffen, introitus, / Impnus, sequenz und responsoria, / Das tregt er als in seiner memoria, / Ad placitum oder gesatzt. / . . . Sein haubt ist ein sollich gradual/In gemessen cantum mit solcher zal, / Das es got selbs hat genotirt darein; Hans Rosenplüt, "Spruch von Nürnberg," Karl Euling, *Das Priamel bis Hans Rosenplüt Studien zur Volkspoesie* (Germanistische Abhandlungen, XXV; Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1905), pp. 46–47.

[12] For example, the Winsem and Sagan fragments contain a Credo setting only the first verse and a *Gloria* setting the first three odd-numbered verses; cf. Willi Apel, *Keyboard Music of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Corpus of Early Keyboard Music, I; American Institute of Musicology, 1963), pp. 17–18 and 11–12.

[13] Munich: Bayrische Staatsbibliothek, Ms Clm. 352b; modern edition, *Das Buxheimer Orgelbuch*, ed. B. A. Wallner (*Das Erbe Deutscher Musik*, Vol. 37–39; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958–59).

[14] Basel: Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. F. I 8a; modern edition, Hans Buchner, *Sämtliche Orgelwerke*, ed. Jost Harro Schmidt (*Das Erbe Deutscher Musik*, Vol. 54–55; Frankfurt: Henry Litolff, 1974).

and Assumption; yet we know that he played for a great many more days of the year.[15] It seems reasonable that the pieces for these great feasts were included because they would be of most use to other organists; it must be assumed, however, that his own playing on the other days was similar, and that the total repertory he played was much more extensive than is now apparent. A similar situation obtains for the repertory of music of many well-known organists of the period. Such an organist as Paul Hofhaimer, who was so famous in his own time that the whole generation of organists following his style of playing were called *Paulomimes*, and whose playing in the liturgy is well documented, is represented in the extant repertory by only a few pieces of liturgical organ music.[16]

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a great dissemination of composed organ music; yet the art of improvisation was the basis of this composed music, and such improvisation was taught in the tutors of organ playing. Two examples may illustrate the relation of improvisation to composed music. Spiridion's *Nova Instructio*[17] consists of an encyclopedia of figures and passagework which are to be practiced over a bass. Some of these figures are drawn literally from the toccatas of Frescobaldi. When applied in proper sequence *ex tempore*, they can be the basis of a piece which is a convincing example of the short toccatas which introduce the *Kyrie* movements of Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali*.[18] The great variety

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[15] Buchner's contract with the cathedral chapter of Constance specified that he play at the high Mass on all duplex and higher feasts the introit, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, sequence, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*, and on high feasts also the hymn, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc dimittis* at vespers and compline, and the responsory, *Te Deum*, and *Benedictus* at matins and lauds, and again at second compline. Cf. Hans Klotz, "Hans Buchner," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. II (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1952), col. 418.

[16] Hans Joachim Moser, *Paul Hofhaimer, ein Lied- und Orgelmeister des deutschen Humanismus* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1966).

[17] Spiridion à Monte Carmelo, *Nova Instructio pro pulsandis organis, spinettis, manuchordiis, etc.…* Four parts (Bamberg: J. J. Immel, 1670; Bamberg: J. G. Seiffert, 1672; Herbstädt: J. Sallver, n. d.) Cf. Bruce Alan Lamott, "*The Nova Instructio pro pulsandis organis* (1670–72) by Spiridion à Monte Carmelo: A Source Book for Keyboard Improvisation," (M. A. Project, Stanford University, 1974).

[18] For an example of such a piece, see Lamott, pp. 35–37.

of figures and possible combinations provides for an almost infinite number of actual pieces of flexible length, allowing the organist to suit his playing to the course of the service. Such "pieces" were perhaps heard in the churches more frequently than the few extant examples composed by Frescobaldi.

A second example is found in Mattheson's *Grosse-General-Bass-Schule*.[19] Mattheson describes a competition for the position of organist held in the cathedral church of Hamburg on October 24, 1725. Each candidate was given the written description of several tasks only immediately before he was to play; he was allowed to read it through and place it upon the music desk of the organ; he then had thirty minutes to perform the following items: (1) a free prelude, two minutes; (2) an elaboration upon a given chorale tune, six minutes; (3) an *ex tempore* fugue on a given subject and countersubject, four minutes (two days later the fugue was to be submitted in writing, with the niceties of counterpoint corrected); (4) an accompaniment of an aria from a figured bass, four minutes; (5) a chaconne over a given bass, six minutes. This is what was required of an excellent organist of that time. Most notably absent is the playing of any piece of completely composed organ music, either at sight or from memory. Rather, all of the tasks included some sort of improvisation.

The immense repertory of music from the long history of organ playing, especially the organ music of the baroque, shows distinctive stylistic features which derive from improvisation. Preludes and toccatas are in styles which are expressly improvisatory. Chorale preludes and variations are played upon a bass and melody, which together imply a harmony; with this harmony as a basis, ornamental figurations of all sorts can be developed in improvisation; the best of the variations could then be written down. Even the fugues show a characteristic that recalls the improvisation described by Mattheson: J. S. Bach's fugues for organ, in contrast to those of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, show an

[19] Johann Mattheson, *General-Bass-Schule oder Der exemplarischen Organisten-Probe* (Hamburg: Johann Christoph Kissner, 1731; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1968), pp. 34–35.

expansiveness and a greater emphasis upon episode that is a clear indication of their improvisatory genesis.

The improvisatory nature of organ playing is essential to the role of the organ in the liturgy. When organ music accompanies a liturgical act, it can be artfully adjusted to the length of the act itself. In the history of organ playing, such adjustments can be found in instructions for performers. The following two examples illustrate this principle, the first in improvisation, and the second in the length of a composed piece whose improvisatory style allows it to end at various points. The *Annakirche Organ Gradual*[20] (for the Carmelite monastery of St. Ann in Augsburg) is a book which gives only those parts of the chant melodies which the organist is to play in alternation with the choir. The book lists nine days of the year on which an offertory procession was held:

> On these days one should play the offertory and the last Agnus longer, since the brothers go to communion.[21]

The usual playing of these chants is thus extended to accommodate the time required for the procession and the communion of the brothers.

Frescobaldi, in the preface to his first book of toccatas tells the player that

> the individual sections may be played separately from one another, in order to enable the player to make a conclusion at will.[22]

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[20] Munich: Universitätsbibliothek, 2° Cod. ms. 153. Cf. Leo Söhner, *Die Geschichte der Begleitung des gregorianischen Chorals in Deutschland vornehmlich im 18. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen der gregorianischen Akademie zu Freiburg in der Schweiz, Heft 16; Augsburg: Benno Fischer, 1931), p. 4.

[21] "An disen tagen sol man das opferent und das letst agnus dester lenger schlagen dy weil di bruder zum sacrament gend." Ibid., the first (unnumbered) folio. The days were the first Sunday of Advent, Christmas, Purification, Annunciation, Pentecost, Visitation, Assumption, the Nativity of Mary, and All Saints' Day.

[22] Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Das erste Buch der Toccaten, Partiten usw.*, 1637 (*Orgel und Klavierwerke*, Band III; Kassel: Barenreiter, 1961), p. iv.

Some of these toccatas are for the elevation of the Mass, and their main cadences allow the organist to conclude the piece at any of the several different points, and so to adjust the length of the playing to the progress of the celebrant.

The flexibility that the organist has in improvisation allows him to play a certain role in the liturgy. Just as the psalm and verse structure of the processional chants (introit and communion) allow the duration of these chants to be suited to the duration of the processions,[23] so even more the organist is capable of timing his playing to the duration of the action. Here, even in the absence of a liturgical text, the organ bears a closeness to the liturgical action. As distinct from the chant, it frequently does not determine the shape of the action, but follows it.

The primary function of the organ as stated by the council, however, is not precisely the manner in which it supports or embellishes the Gregorian music, but in just what it adds to it in general by doing so:

> it adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies, and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.[24]

This actually represents a consensus of writers over a very long period, but its history is interesting and instructive for the present, and illustrates an important principle: that the origin of a liturgical item may not indicate the proper significance which it eventually assumes.[25]

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[23] Cf. the present series, Part I: "The Gregorian Mass in General," pp. 9–10, above.

[24] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Art. 120.

[25] We are often given an erudite history of a rite and its practice, with especial emphasis upon its origins. This concern with origins has led some to believe that when the origin of a rite is known, the rite may be purified by being, reduced to its primitive form; but if there is something suspect in this origin, the rite may itself be suspect. It is frequently said, for example, that the chasuble was normal secular clothing of a Roman in early times, implying that the priest should wear the normal clothing of our times. This overlooks the process of the development of the liturgy, in which things secular in origin are consecrated by their very

The origin of the organ in the western liturgy is in the imperial liturgy of the Byzantine empire. Pepin, Charlemagne's predecessor, received an organ as a gift from the Byzantine emperor. In the Byzantine court, the organ was an attribute of the emperor. It seems not to have been used in the liturgy except in that unique ceremony in which the patriarch and the emperor met and exchanged ceremonial gestures, and it was restricted to accompanying the emperor.[26] Charlemagne used it in a similar fashion, having the organ mounted near his throne in the rear balcony of his court church at Aachen. It was not long before other churches imitated the imperial church and installed organs of their own. But there it was seen to represent the dignity and power of God, and specifically as giving man a foretaste of heaven. By the thirteenth century Durandus could write that the organ was particularly associated with the *Sanctus*, recalling the Old Testament playing of the instrument during the sacrifice and the vision of the holiness of God with which the *Sanctus* text itself is so intimately connected—both in its scriptural origin,[27] and its significance in the Mass; further it plays an essential role in the calling to mind the image of the heavenly Jerusalem.[28] Thus an instrument which was a sign of the dignity of an earthly ruler, albeit in the Byzantine view a sacred one, was taken over and came to be a sign of the sacred itself; since that time this function has largely remained; it is the liturgical instrument par excellence, since it is understood to be a sacred instrument.

In the later middle ages, the organ had a second sort of symbolism—it was often an especial sign of the Masses in honor of the

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assumption into the liturgy. There is a rite for the blessing of liturgical vestments, and they are to be blessed before use. If, however, they are not, their use in the liturgy constitutes the blessing. Things secular and imperfect can be made sacred and worthy by being taken up and consecrated by use.

[26] Cf. Edmund A. Bowles, "The Symbolism of the Organ in the Middle Ages: A Study in the History of Ideas," *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music, A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese* (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 27–39.

[27] Isaiah 6:3.

[28] Cf. Herbert Douteil CSSp., *Studien zu Durantis "Rationale divinorum officiorum" als kirchenmusikalischer Quelle* (Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung, Bd. LII; Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1969), p. 174.

Blessed Virgin. In monastic churches of the later middle ages, the "Lady-Mass" was a votive Mass said in addition to the Mass prescribed by the liturgy for the day. Thus, singers who were to sing the capitular Mass plus the whole office were also to provide for the music of this votive Mass. Small wonder that it was not assigned to a whole choir, but to a few singers, and with only a few singers, the organ was the most efficient means of embellishing that particular Mass. Since the Lady-Mass was the vehicle of considerable popular devotion, there was a concern that it be provided with sufficient music,

> because wherever the divine service is more honorably celebrated, the glory of the Church is increased, and the people are aroused to greater devotion.[29]

Thus of the liturgical organ music in the *Buxheim Organ Book*,[30] a large portion is devoted to Marian texts. The three introits found there are *Gaudeamus*, *Rorate caeli*, and *Salve sancta parens*, the first for Marian feasts, the second for votive Marian Masses in Advent, and the third for votive Marian Masses throughout the year.[31] Likewise, the only *Gloria* in the collection is that *de Beata Virgine*, set to include the Marian tropes then customary.[32]

In sixteenth-century England, it seems that the Marian Mass was still the locus of such a symbolism, since the "Lady-Masses" of

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[29] Abbot Wheathamstead quoted in Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 219.

[30] Cf. note 13 above.

[31] In fifteenth-century Germany, *Rorate caeli* was not assigned to the fourth Sunday of Advent, but reserved for the votive Masses of the Blessed Virgin. Willi Apel, in his monumental work *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700* (translated and revised by Hans Tischler; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 67, has randomly identified the first two as being for the feast of St. Thomas and the fourth Sunday of Advent, completely missing the Marian significance of the group of pieces.

[32] For the texts and melodies of these tropes as they were used in *Gloria IX*, see Peter Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, Dritter Teil, Gregorianische Formenlehre*, Dritte Auflage (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1921; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1970), p. 510.

Nicholas Ludford[33] show an *alternatim* arrangement which is complementary to the conventional scheme of the organ Mass described below for Buchner.

While the Marian association has not lasted into our own time, and the early imperial association was thoroughly supplanted by a generally sacred one, the sacred function is complemented by another function: the organ is also the sign of festivity. Throughout its history the organ was to be played on the more festive occasions, while it was not played on the ferial days. It was a sign of festivity, of rejoicing, and of praise, rather than just of solemnity, since on some of the most solemn days of the year, the organ was not played. The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600[34] codified the medieval practice; it specified that during Advent and Lent the organ was not to be played except on important feast days, and the one exceptional Sunday of each season, *Gaudete* and *Laetare*.[35] Particularly strict was the absolute prohibition of organ and bells during the last three days of Holy Week. On Holy Thursday the organ was allowed at the *Gloria* as one bit of festivity in the Mass of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, but not after that until the *Gloria* of Holy Saturday. On these most solemn days, it was the signs of festivity which were eliminated. The symbolism of it has always been compelling, and the complete absence of organ and bells on those days serves as well to enhance the festivity of Easter, when they are once again joyfully played.

The organ was also not played at funerals, with one interesting exception: for funerals of important prelates or titled gentlemen; it was allowed that a single principal stop could be played with the shutters closed.[36] Thus a certain public tone could be set

[33] Nicholas Ludford, *Seven Lady-Masses* (Collected Works, Vol. I; American Institute of Musicology, 1963).

[34] *Caeremoniale episcoporum jussu Clementis VIII Pont. Max. novissime reformatum* (Romae: Ex typographia linguarum externarum, 1600), Cap. XXVIII, "De Organo, organista, et musicis seu cantoribus et norma per eos servanda in divinis," pp. 133–136.

[35] The third Sunday of Advent and the fourth Sunday of Lent.

[36] "In the offices and Mass of the dead the organ must not be played (*Caeremoniale*, Chapter 28). It is, however, in custom to play for the funerals of

for such an occasion, without implying the fully festive character of the usual organ music.

The prohibition of the organ at funerals is often forgotten today, along with some of the other solemnities of the traditional rite. While there is no question that those close to a deceased person should recognize and rejoice in his hoped-for destiny, the funeral is no guarantee of this, and it is still the occasion for prayers for his soul. Further, the human need to mourn the deceased and to find some objectification of that mourning in a liturgical ceremony is perhaps still best found in the Gregorian Requiem Mass.[37] A quiet joy which elevates mourning is appropriate; but a festive atmosphere that undercuts it could easily be felt as a betrayal of the deceased.

While the most important general features of the music for the organ are that it elevates the mind to a contemplation of heavenly things, and it adds a note of festivity to the celebration, these have been accomplished in the exercise of four specific functions: alternating, replacing, intoning, and accompanying. Through the history of organ music each of these has given the organ a role particularly close to the liturgical action.

In the documented history of the organ through the mid-sixteenth century,the most prevalent form of liturgical organ music is designated by the term *alternatim*. Here the organist assumed the liturgical role of one of the elements into which the choir was divided for alternation, either that of one of the equal halves of the choir in antiphonal alternation or that of the cantors in responsorial alternation, and it performed those portions of the chant assigned to that part in alternation.

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principal prelates or titled gentlemen, not as an organ, but for the devout consolation of the assembled mourners; make use of the principal at once, do not play toccatas or ricercares, and [*play*] with the palls covered." Adriano Banchieri, *L'organo suonarino* (1622), translated in Donald Earl Marcase, "Adriano Banchieri, *L'organo Suonarino*: Transcription and Commentary," (Ph. D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1970), p. 31.

[37] Of all the Gregorian pieces, this is one which still belongs to Catholic people; I have often begun the introit of the *Requiem Mass* with a choir only to discover that a number of the congregation were singing along.

It is most likely that what the organ played was simply the chant melody at first. The mechanism of the earliest organs is thought to have been clumsy enough completely to occupy a single person playing an unaccompanied melody.[38] However, rather early, an illustration of the organ shows two monks sitting side by side at a single instrument, most likely playing a piece in two parts.[39] Perrot speculates that the use of the term *Organum* for polyphonic vocal music actually came about because the polyphonic vocal music imitated the sound of the instrument already called organum, that is, that the organ was already playing some sort of polyphonic music.[40] Whether Perrot is correct or not, the general history seems clear enough. At Notre Dame in Paris, the center of the intellectual world of the thirteenth century, certain portions of the chants assigned to the cantors were being sung by them in polyphonic music, and this practice became widely disseminated throughout Europe. In the fourteenth century, many organs were introduced into the churches, even at Notre Dame, and often those portions which the cantors had sung were transferred to the organ.[41] Leo Schrade has seen the connection between these practices in the fact that the extant organ music from the fourteenth century shows striking traces of the Notre Dame style.[42] The greater preponderance of extant pieces are for the ordinary of the Mass, though hymns and the *Magnificat*

[38] This manner of playing is illustrated in a painting from around 1480; "Sir Edward Bonkil, Provost of Trinity College, Kneeling Before an Angel Who Plays the Organ," by Hugo van der Goes shows an angel playing with one hand; on the organ is a book open to the chant O Lux beata Trinitas; the painting is reproduced in Robert Wangermée, *Flemish Music and Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 97.

[39] Jean Perrot, *The Organ from Its Invention in the Hellenistic Period to the End of the Thirteenth Century*, translated by Norma Deane (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), plate XXIV, 1, an illustration from the Utrecht Psalter, dated by scholars in the Carolingian era.

[40] Perrot, *The Organ*, Chapter Sixteen, "The Organ and Organum," pp. 287–91.

[41] Jacques Handschin, "Zur Geschichte von Notre Dame," *Acta Musicologica*, IV (1932), pp. 5–17, 49–55, 104–105.

[42] Leo Schrade, "The Organ in the Mass of the 15th Century," *The Musical Quarterly*, XXVII (1942), pp. 329–336, 467–487, especially 467–471.

abound as well by the sixteenth century. The resulting alternatim organ Mass is documented from the end of the thirteenth century[43] to at least the beginning of the present one,[44] and is represented by such excellent composers as Andrea Gabrieli and François Couperin.[45]

In its most developed form, the organ Mass consists of the setting of every other verse of the ordinary of the Mass in polyphonic music, leaving the alternate verses to be sung in chant by the choir. Like the Notre Dame polyphony, it bears a responsorial function in that the organ is the leading element in the alternation; exclusive of the priest's intonation, it always begins the performance of the chant.

Thus a typical organ Mass in the collection of Johannes Buchner[46] includes the following arrangement:

KYRIE

Organ	Choir
1. *Kyrie* 1	2. *Kyrie* 2
3. *Kyrie* 3	4. *Christe* 1
5. *Christe* 2	6. *Christe* 3
7. *Kyrie* 4	8. *Kyrie* 5
9. *Kyrie* 6	

43 Cf. Gerhard Pietzsch, "Übersehene Quellen zur mittelalterlichen Orgelgeschichte," *Anuario Musical*, XII (1957), p. 92.

44 Cf. Athelstan Riley, A *Guide to High Mass Abroad Being a Manual for the Use of English Churchmen attending the Celebration of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic Countries*, second edition (London: Mowbray, 1906), pp. 9–10.

45 Andrea Gabrieli, *Tre Messe per Organo*, edited by Sandro Dalla Libera (Milan: Ricordi, 1959); Francois Couperin, "Pièces d'orgue," *Archives des Maîtres de l'Orgue des XVIe, XVIIe, et XVIIIe Siècles* (Paris: Durand, 1904; reprint, New York: Johnson, 1972), Vol. V, pp. 109–192.

46 Cf. note 14.

GLORIA

Celebrant: *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Organ	Choir
1. *Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.*	2. *Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.*
3. *Domine Deus, rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.*	4. *Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.*
5. *Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*	6. *Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.*
7. *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.*	8. *Quoniam tu solus sanctus.*
9. *Tu solus Dominus.*	10. *Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.*
11. *Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*	

SANCTUS

1. *Sanctus,*	2. *Sanctus,*
3. *Sanctus Dominus Deus sabaoth.*	4. *Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.*
5. *Osanna in excelsis.*	6. *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*
7. *Osanna in excelsis.*	

AGNUS DEI

1. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*	2. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi miserere nobis.*
3. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona mobis pacem.*	

The general arrangement is that the organ begins and ends the performance of the chant, thus framing the chant with the more festive organ music.[47]

Occasionally the *Credo* was set for alternation with the organ, although this seems to have been less frequent, and was sometimes the subject of an express prohibition.[48] The text of the Credo being a series of explicit beliefs, it was thought that all of this text should be expressly sung, while the texts of the other movements of the ordinary are more general, include a good deal of repetition, and do not suffer in assigning part of them to the organ.

Before the reformation, the musical content of each verse for the organ included literally every note of that verse of the chant. In that sense the organ's playing fulfilled the liturgical requirement of the singing of that particular piece. Later composers sometimes followed this practice as well. Frescobaldi's *Kyrie della Domenica* quoted below is an example of the literal setting of the notes of the chant.[49] By the late sixteenth century the organ verse sometimes only implied the whole chant by treating its beginning motive in imitation. Andrea Gabrieli's first *Kyrie de Beata Virgine*[50] is an example of this, setting only the first eight notes of the Gregorian melody in imitation throughout the whole verse. In the

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[47] The distribution of verses within the *Gloria* varies somewhat; the greatest difference is that Italian and French sources set the four acclamations beginning *Laudàmus te* as separate verses in alternation; German sources group them together with the first verse as one long verse. German sources group two verses somewhere in the middle together in order that the whole piece will have an odd number of verses, allowing the organ both to begin and end; Italian sources divide the last verse to accomplish the same purpose. For a detailed description of such *alternatim* practice, see William Peter Mahrt, "*The Missae ad Organum* of Heinrich Isaac," (Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1969), Chapter Three, "The Organ Mass," pp. 19–45.

[48] Martin Gerbert, *De Cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad praesens tempus* (Typis San Blasianis, 1774; reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1968), Vol. II, pp. 186–7.

[49] Cf. example 1.

[50] Andrea Gabrieli, *Tre messe*, pp. 23–24.

absence of a clear presentation of the whole chant melody, the question of the text arose, and the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* of 1600 required that when the organ verse was played, the text be recited by someone in the choir.[51] Finally another scheme appeared, in which the organ played the same verses it had before, but now only after they had been sung by the choir:[52]

Choir	Organ	Choir
1. *Kyrie* 1	2. *Kyrie* 1	3. *Kyrie* 2
4. *Kyrie* 3	5. *Kyrie* 3	6. *Christe* 1
7. *Christe* 2	8. *Christe* 2	9. *Christe* 3
10. *Kyrie* 4	11. *Kyrie* 4	12. *Kyrie* 5
13. *Kyrie* 6	14. *Kyrie* 6	

This somewhat redundant scheme reflects a breakdown in the function of the organ as actually carrying the performance of the proper liturgical melody. The organ only reflects and amplifies its traditional portions, now sung first by the choir.

While the *alternatim* organ Mass continued to be widely practiced in many places hence, another way for the organ to support the liturgy became more important: the organ served to replace a movement of the proper of the Mass.

Since the sixteenth century the organ had sometimes been assigned the role of playing an entire movement of the proper without the participation of the choir. This is represented in England by the particularly numerous complete settings of the melody *Felix namque*, the offertory for Masses of the Blessed Virgin.[53] Again, the particular ancillary character of the Lady-Mass may account for relieving the singers of some of their function in a second Mass of the day.

The traditional identification of the liturgical function of the organ by setting the complete chant melody was sometimes continued by Italian composers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

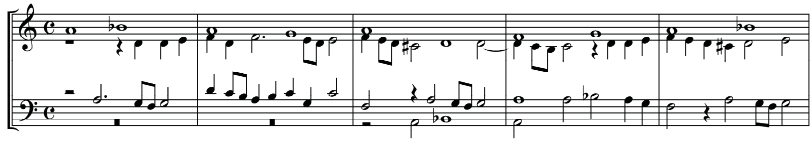
[51] *Caeremoniale*, p. 135.

[52] Bernardino Bottazzi, *Choro et Organo* (1614); cf. Apel, *History of Keyboard Music*, pp. 418–19.

[53] Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain*, p. 285, n. 4.

centuries. To this, however, another means was added—that of affect and style. The character of the particular movements for organ could be varied for contrast and to set the tone for the parts of the Mass during which they were played. Such a variety of musical styles might be better realized when the chant melody is not kept. Thus a recognizable and well-established distinction of styles came to be a basis for delineating the shape of a Mass in which the organ substitutes music in characteristic styles for the specific chant propers. Though it is not immediately apparent from the titles of the pieces, the three organ Masses of Girolamo Frescobaldi actually follow this method.

Frescobaldi's three Masses in the *Fiori musicali* (1635)[54] form a high point in the playing of substitute propers based upon a distinction of affect and style. Frescobaldi had a choice of the most opportune diversity of styles in the learned counterpoint of the *stile antico* and in the expressive harmonies and rhythms of the modern style of his time. The *stile antico* provided the *cantus firmus* and the ricercar styles. By keeping one movement of the ordinary of the Mass, the *Kyrie*, as a possible alternation piece, he based his practice in the centuries-old *alternatim* Mass; the specified Gregorian *Kyrie* is clearly set in the organ verse which can be alternated with the sung *Kyrie*. By setting it in a *cantus firmus* fashion, the link with the long tradition is maintained, and this forms one pole of expression in these Masses: the ancient, the objective, the normative, the learned, the tradition-bearing pole.



Example 1: *Cantus firmus* style: Frescobaldi, *Kyrie della Domenica*[55]

The ricercar is the other style of the stile antico; a work of serious contrapuntal invention upon a relatively short sequence of long

[54] Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Orgel- und Klavier Werke*, edited by Pierre Pidoux (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1948–1959), Vol. V, *Fiori musicali*, 1635.

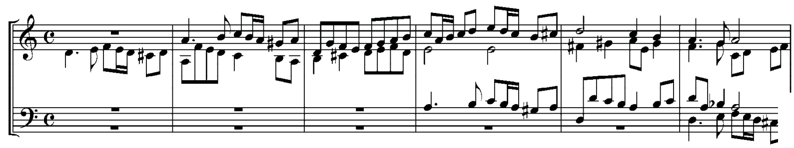
[55] Based upon *Kyrie Orbis factor* (Mass XI of the modern Kyriale); *Fiori musicali*, p. 4.

notes as a subject, it derives its style from the sixteenth-century motet and shares with the cantus firmus style the expression of the absolute, the normative, and the objective.



Example 2: Ricercar style: Frescobaldi, *Recercar dopo il Credo*[56]

A somewhat lighter style is that of the canzona. It derives from the French secular chanson of the sixteenth century, and it expresses a spirited kind of movement. The humorous elements of the chanson have, however, been turned to a somewhat more serious purpose in the greater use of counterpoint and variation.



Example 3: Canzona style: Frescobaldi, *Canzon dopo l'Epistola*[57]

The genre which represents the most modern style is the toccata. Short toccatas usually introduce the *Kyrie* and sometimes the ricercar after the *Credo*. Their improvisatory character forms a point of contrast with the longer contrapuntal movements with which they are paired. This improvisatory character consists mainly in the application of a variety of soloistic passagework, but also in the implied variety of tempo which Frescobaldi prescribes for the toccata.[58] It is also linked intimately with that direct sort of expression which was so characteristic of the early baroque, and derived ultimately from the madrigals of the late sixteenth century. The larger toccatas, for the elevation, epitomize that kind of

[56] *Fiori musicali*, p. 16.

[57] Ibid., p. 13.

[58] Cf. note 22.

expression. They show less purely instrumental figuration, but rather, like the late sixteenth-century madrigal, incorporate unexpected harmonic progressions which often include chromaticism. They most often center around E, the Phrygian mode, suited to the expression of the mystical and the ineffable.[59]



Example 4: Elevation toccata: Frescobaldi, *Toccata cromatica per l'Elevatione*[60]

Willi Apel has characterized these toccatas:

> Nowhere in music has the spirit of the Catholic baroque found as perfect an expression as in these toccatas. Their inspirational sounds are enlivened here and there by figures that symbolize almost pictorially the gestures of supplicating genuflection and devout invocation.[61]

The prevalence of descending motion over wide-ranging, Phrygian harmony, indeed, expresses the spirit of the mystical adoration at the elevation of the Mass. This event is then the appropriate location of the music which is the most expressive, subjective, mystical, and personal, embodied in the *stile moderno*.

Not only has a clear and effective high point at the elevation been created, but it is placed in the context of a sequence of styles, which together projects the overall liturgical form of the Mass. The sequence for the Mass of the Catechumens is:

prelude	contrapuntal style (*cantus firmus*)	canzona
introit	*Kyrie*	gradual

59 Apel, *History of Keyboard Music*, p. 478.

60 *Fiori musicali*, p. 18.

61 Apel, *History of Keyboard Music,* p. 419.

The progression from the learned contrapuntal style to the more spirited canzona creates a kind of direction whose object is to lead to the high point of that part of the Mass—the gospel. The Mass of the Faithful begins again with a learned contrapuntal form (in two of the four, preceded by a short toccata). In the middle of the progression of ricercar to canzona, the exceptional piece which transforms the sequence has been placed; this emphasizes the toccata as the most important piece. Since most of the organ pieces fall at points when the propers would be sung, it may be surmised that they replaced those propers, since a *Kyrie* in alternation with a choir singing plainsong seems likely, the other parts of the ordinary were probably also sung in plainsong. Thus the whole Mass would have the following shape:

[Toccata]	[*Cantus* firmus]	chant	chant	[Canzona]	chant
introit - -- - -	*Kyrie* - - - - -	*Gloria* - - -	epistle- - - -	gradual- - - -	gospel

chant	[(Toccata &) Ricercar]	chant	[Elevation toccata]	chant	chant	[Canzona]
Credo- - - -	offertory- - - -	preface- - - - & *Sanctus*	canon- - - - -	*Pater*- - - - *noster*	*Agnus*- - *Dei*	communion[62]

This scheme could well be used today in a church where a devoted volunteer choir is capable of singing the ordinary of the Mass, but not the proper. Given the current emphasis upon communion and the rubrical prohibition of music during the canon, the elevation could conceivably be played during the communion, and the canzona used as a recessional. The communion would thus be the point of the most personal and expressive music. The canzona at the gradual is sectional, and one section could easily serve to follow each of the minor lessons of the new rite. The ricercar is also sectional, and one section might suffice for the offertory, unless there is incensation. These pieces are sometimes

[62] This was probably used when there were not a large number of communions, or even any; thus "after the communion" described the location of the communion proper.

still played in the churches, but scarcely ever in the places for which they were intended; they would be much more effective if they were used as they were intended—to articulate the whole form of the Mass. Further, there is a larger repertory of which they form only a part, which could constitute an extensive but stable repertory in which the form itself could become familiar to the participants, and thus take its place as a musical support of worship.

Two other functions of the organ are more ancillary and practical, yet they have had a significant role in the liturgy. The first, that of intonation, finds its simplest form in the literal "pre-intonation" of the *Gloria* and *Credo* in the Mass. Here the organ plays the same role as the cantors who pre-intone the antiphons of the office. It is a purely practical function—to assist a celebrant who finds a difficulty in imagining the proper pitch and scale with which to begin. This function is more generalized in the first preludes for the organ.[63] They are constructed so that they can be played in whatever mode the organist needs: they simply elaborate upon the scale tones of the piece to follow, setting the pitch and scale, and making a graceful cadence. This function is also to be seen in the *intonationes* of the early seventeenth-century, but they have yet an additional function. Praetorius describes their use.[64] The organist is to improvise upon the notes which the strings need for tuning. Thus he plays a figuration over the successive open notes of the strings while they tune, and his function is to cover the sound of the tuning strings as well as to provide a setting of the key. This kind of preluding is a stylistic antecedent of the toccatas, and in the hands of such early seventeenth-century masters as Frescobaldi it becomes a substantive musical style, whose musical function is to provide a contrast with more polyphonic styles.

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[63] Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), pp. 88–89.

[64] Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum*, Volume III, Part 3, Chapter 7, in a concluding nota bene; translated in Hans Lampl, "A Translation of *Syntagma Musicum III* by Michael Praetorius" (D. M. A. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1957), pp. 256–258.

The most recent of all of the functions of the organ discussed here is that of accompaniment. There is no question of organ accompaniment of chant in the Middle Ages. Even at the time of the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* of 1600, when it was beginning to be customary to use the organ as accompaniment of polyphonic music, there is no mention of this function. The first extant accompaniments of plainsong other than hymns are from the eighteenth century, and are *basso continuo* parts, which set a complete harmony to each individual note of the chant melody.[65] This approach to the accompaniment of chant seems to have lasted until the Solesmes revival, and even influenced the polyphonic settings of plainsong.[66] Until the Solesmes method defined the possibility of plainsong notes constituting only the parts of a flexible beat, composers set them as if they were long notes. Solesmes' conception of the rhythm of the chant allowed the placement of several plainsong notes to one harmony, and reflect a more animated style of performance of the chant.

This sketch of some of the history of liturgical organ music and its repertory suggests several practical applications:

> (1) The treasury of Catholic liturgical music for the organ is very great; the organist should seek out new pieces from this repertory and consider their suitability to both the liturgy of their own time and that of the present;
>
> (2) from a knowledge of the repertory and its history, the skilled organist can apply the principles seen there in his own playing, for example,
>
>> (a) he can learn to improvise, first trying simple intonations, preludes, and toccatas, and then variations on a figured bass, finally, adding some imitation, and developing a sense for contrapuntal improvisation;

[65] Leo Söhner, *Die Geschichte der Begleitung des gregorianischen Chorals in Deutschland vornehmlich im. 18. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen der gregorianischen Akademie zu Freiburg in der Schweiz, Heft 16; Augsburg: Benno Fischer, 1931), p. 46.

[66] Cf. Benjamin Van Wye, "Gregorian Influences in French Organ Music before the *Motu proprio*," *Journal of the American Musciological Society*, XXVII (1974), pp. 1–24.

(b) the choice of music can take into account the use of borrowed melodic material which bears some familiarity and significance for the listeners;

(c) the organist can develop a sense of the suitability of particular styles to particular actions; it can be valid for his listeners if he educates them to it by exercising it consistently;

(d) the organist can attempt to supply music at those places where there is an action otherwise musically unaccompanied, for example, if the kiss of peace is given, a short improvisation upon the *Agnus Dei* melody might contribute a musical continuity to that action, as well as introducing the melody to be sung;

(e) the juxtaposition of old and new styles, as seen in the Masses of Frescobaldi, can be purposefully employed using the diversity of styles now available to the organist; and finally,

(3) the prescription of the council should be taken seriously, that the proper instrument is the pipe organ, and not the electronic imitation.

As the result of some misunderstandings of the role of music in the liturgy, the organ is being neglected or even forgotten in some of our churches. It is claimed that other instruments are now preferred, or that there is no longer a real place for the organ. But these other instruments have no repertory of sacred music, while the organ as the traditional sacred instrument has a very rich one. Further, there is now a greater freedom of choice of music, which in fact allows the organ to be used purposefully in many parts of the Mass. It remains for organists to identify these possibilities, to experiment with their usage, and thus to cultivate a deeper understanding of the role of the organ in practice. It is hoped that the present discussion may provide some suggestions for a truly purposeful use of the organ in the liturgy.

5

GREGORIAN CHANT AS A *FUNDAMENTUM* OF WESTERN MUSICAL CULTURE

There are times for the development of interesting scholarly presentations which convey to the membership of a society the latest results of research, interesting in themselves, and contributing a tiny piece to the total picture of the discipline. There are also times for a looking back upon scholarship and history for fundamental principles by which the whole discipline is justified. Now is the time for the latter. There are a few fundamental things about the practice of Gregorian chant which now need to be stated clearly.

We meet today from distant places, but we are drawn together because we hold something profound in common. In singing the Mass of the Holy Ghost this morning, we have participated together in divine worship. We are able to come together and immediately join our voices in a profound religious act of sophisticated and developed expression, because we share an artifact in common, music which stands in a lineage of nearly two thousand years of tradition. It is at once a product and a living manifestation of our culture. It rests on a commonly held theology, and it is

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This address was delivered at the Sixth International Church Music Congress in Salzburg, August 1974 and appeared as an article in *Sacred Music* 102, no. 1 (1975).

expressed through a commonly known form. It means much to each of us because we have already thought about its content and admired its beauty for many years. It is part of a body of Gregorian chant which plays a fundamental role in our culture. I wish to explore this relation of Gregorian chant to our western culture; but first it is necessary to establish certain fundamentals concerning culture, religion, tradition, and music.

The foundation of a culture is a context of beliefs and values held in common.[1] These things held in common are a basis for commerce among men. Indeed the word "community" expresses etymologically the fact that a social organization is based upon things in common.

Culture is more than just communality of beliefs and values though; it is a communality of practice, of ways of expressing beliefs and values. Etymologically the word culture draws an analogy to the farmer cultivating a field, "inciting nature by some human labor to produce fruits which nature left to itself would have been incapable of producing."[2] The human community has all of humanity as its expanse of soil, and the labor is a "labor of reason and the virtues." These labors result in human institutions which embody the values and beliefs in developed forms, which are themselves understood in common: language, social conventions, patterns of living in general.

The products of a high culture are characterized by, at one and the same time, communality and excellence. They are held in common, and everyone knows them; yet they do not participate in the derogatory sense of the word common, because of their intrinsic excellence. This is because they are received from tradition. Everyone knows certain fables and sayings because he grew up with them, and has known them all his life. But he will not tire of them or lose his interest in them, because they have the excellence which tradition guarantees. The accumulation of countless

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[1] Cf. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948), pp. 48–19.

[2] Jacques Maritain, "Religion and Culture," in *Essays in Order*, ed. Christopher Dawson and J. F. Burns (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 3.

generations' wisdom, they have an archetypal character and a multiplicity of levels of meanings. They have already survived the test of having maintained interest for several generations, indeed, of having outlived many individual men.

If a culture is the fruit of the highest faculties of man, then religion is the highest form of culture. While religion may transcend the limits of geographical cultures, it is itself a matter of culture. It is something which must be cultivated, it must exist in developed forms and learned patterns. It must use the developments of secular culture. Where would knowledge of scripture be without the skills of language? Where would theology be without philosophy? Where would liturgy be without the knowledge and skill of music? These are ways in which secular culture must support religion. But it is much more than that; there must also be a cultivated religion, a religious culture. Skill in language is a cultural matter in itself not sacred, yet the traditional translations of the Bible, the collects and hymns of the Roman rite exemplify the religious cultivation of language. The philosophy of Aristotle is not essentially religious, but it was, in fact, the hand-maiden to scholastic theology, a religious science. The science and art of musical composition are themselves aspects of secular culture, but in addition, in the hands of the masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they became essential ingredients of a sacred music. There is such a thing, then, as religious culture; it is the product of the application of human talent, reason, skill, discernment and taste to matters of religion. It is a reasoned, ordered, profound embodiment of religious essentials in a coherent and beautiful system. But it is more than this, since all of the human achievements are the subject of grace. Since it is the work of holy men on sacred subjects filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it has a greater claim to authenticity.

The highest and most inscrutable aspect of a religious culture is worship. It is the communal activity proper to religion. Since it involves things that are essentially mysteries, it depends less upon the activity of human reason, than upon tradition. It must be realized in the concrete, and must use elements whose significance is established in the culture. It must use commonly accepted forms as well. All of these things achieve the greatest communality

when they are received from tradition. In other words, it must use traditional artifacts.

A traditional art has been defined as follows: it "has fixed ends, and ascertained means of operation, has been transmitted in pupillary succession from an immemorial past, and retains its values even when, as in the present day, it has gone quite out of fashion."[3] Religion uses traditional arts in such a way.

The visual and the musical may help to illustrate the matter of specific tradition by comparing the Eastern and Western Churches. Perhaps one of the strongest traditional elements in the Eastern Church is that of the icon. There is a whole theology of incarnation and image which stems especially from the Second Council of Nicea, but goes back to the New Testament. It places a primary stress upon the spiritual character of the representation, and upon the necessity of continuity in making new icons. A painter of an icon does not express his personality, or even his personal ideas on the subject to be painted; rather he makes a spiritualized image of the person depicted. This provides sufficient continuity that anyone familiar with the context of eastern iconography can without any trouble recognize the face of a saint or Christ in icons by artists widely separated in time and place.[4] The traditional liturgical art *par excellence* of the Eastern Church is the icon.

The traditional art *par excellence* of the Western Church, on the other hand, is music. While the contemplative and static character of the eastern spirit is best manifested in the visual, non-temporal art of the icon, the dynamic and more active character of the west manifests itself in music, a temporal art.

Music as a temporal art is the means of ordering the entire liturgy, and it provides a number of kinds of order. To recited texts it provides an elevated declamation and continuity, and reflects the tranquil ecstasy appropriate to hieratic prayer. For the entire

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[3] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Nature of 'Folklore' and 'Popular Art'," in *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 135.

[4] Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, 1969), pp. 11–50.

community, it provides a means of intimately uniting the voices of discrete individuals through an external rhythmic base upon which they act in common. More important though, it unites their interior intentions as well, since it not only provides a rhythmic framework, it also projects a state of soul, a sacred affect, which raises the heart and mind of the individual to a level outside himself. To sacred actions it provides an accompaniment; it projects a rhythm which is appropriate to a kind of sacred motion, elevated as well by a sacred affect. It also serves a more purely musical function; in a few places it departs from its text and moves into the realm of wordless joy in the praise of God.

In all of these things an overriding aesthetic function is also present: "to add delight to prayer," according to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*.[5] But to say delight is not quite enough; it is a delight of the whole being, at once spiritual and sensible; it is a delight in the splendor of order, of a principle of order embodied in a concrete thing, but so constituted that it recalls to the mind the manner in which order is present in all things, and leads the mind to the contemplation of the divine as the source and most perfect example of order. Thus, while serving to order and organize worship in a practical way, music, in addition, raises the quality of the participation in that worship to a point that can be called contemplative, and in such a way that the active and contemplative aspects are not contradictory, but mutually supportive.

Thus the role of music in liturgy is not as focal point, but as the means to other ends. This presumes a certain relationship to innovation. The aesthetic function of music in liturgy is as follows: the perception of and identifying with the order reflected in the music orders the unruly passions, placing them into a kind of balance, freeing the mind of the vestiges of worldly cares; the attention is then free to give itself to the matter at hand. When the order is a known one, the worshipper is most free to identify with it and lift his heart. But when the order of the music includes an essential and unresolved element of surprise, the attention may be drawn only to the music and its technical features. Thus

[5] Chapter VI, article 112.

innovation in liturgical music may take place only over a rather long period of time, if it is not to focus the attention upon the means rather than the end. The worshipper may be impressed or edified by innovation, but he may not have worshipped, though he be unaware of it.

The foregoing reflections suggest that tradition plays an essential role in the practice of liturgical music. How does this relate to a specific culture, that of the European West, where the idea of progress has fostered continual innovation? First, I should like to distinguish between traditional and progressive cultures.

A traditional culture is one in which the patterns of belief and action remain constant; this is due to a careful and faithful observance of tradition in all its minute details. What changes occur in the pattern are largely unintentional and take place over a rather long span of time. This is true of many non-western cultures.[6]

A progressive culture bears a different relationship to tradition. It, too, has a tradition of long standing, but one consciously the object of innovation and reformulation. Each generation makes its mark upon it.

Western Europe has such a progressive culture; the process of innovation has long held an important role here. This process has however been considerably accelerated in the 19th and 20th centuries. The romantic idea of genius placed a new emphasis upon innovation; the genius was a man who left his personal mark on conventional materials so strongly as to transform them. This in turn placed a new emphasis upon individualism, with the result that in the 20th century, it fell to the individual to invent his own materials anew. This, I believe, is the root of the crisis faced by western musical culture at the present, since, in the process, it has unwittingly forsaken a relationship to things held in common.

In the context of the progressive culture of western Europe, what has been the role of tradition, especially in the area of sacred music? The fact that the Christian religion is in certain essentials

[6] Christopher Dawson cites the Confucian culture of China as an example of a high culture in which a scrupulous observance of traditional dicta maintained the culture in a steady state for centuries; *Religion and Culture*, pp. 161–172.

inalterably traditional has provided certain constants to the culture. While doctrine admits of development, certain basic beliefs remain constant; they are passed on by a tradition of doctrine. While the text of the liturgy remained basically fixed, especially since the Council of Trent, a different situation obtained in the case of music; music was never the subject of the detailed codification that liturgical texts were; rather its own living tradition sustained it where it would; where the spirit of innovation was stronger, it prevailed. Generally, a creative tension existed between tradition and innovation which produced a continuous interaction between sacred and secular, traditional and progressive, between the immutable and the timely, the universal and the personal.

Throughout the history of western European sacred music, there has been a fundamental presence, a traditional element, a norm against which other things were measured: this *fundamentum* was the received melodies of the liturgy: Gregorian chant.

Gregorian chant is a traditional art in the best sense of the definition given above: it "has fixed ends," its role in the liturgy, "ascertained means," its consistent musical style; it "has been transmitted in pupillary succession," witness the unbroken history of singing at Nonnberg in Salzburg; "from an immemorial past," it antedates its own written history, "and retains its values even when, as in the present day, it has gone out of fashion."

I should like to examine the history of Gregorian chant in order to show the several ways in which it has played the role of a fundamentum of western musical culture. I see three basic ways in which it has played this role: (1) as the traditional music of the Roman rite, it was the most prominent music of the first millennium, and so was the historical foundation and root of successive developments; (2) it was the structural basis for the first centuries of the era of polyphonic music, and the point of departure for succeeding developments; (3) as a common musical repertory, it served an exemplary function in the teaching about music.

The history of western music in the first millennium is essentially the history of Gregorian chant, and its living development extends well into the second millennium. It is thus a foundation stone which spans as great a historical period as the whole edifice

built upon it. But within the history of chant itself, there are certain fundamentals, certain constant procedures, even a fundamental repertory around which the greater repertory centers.

The most fundamental Gregorian pieces are psalmody. The Psalter as the scriptural base of the liturgy is the canonized prayer book. Within its 150 psalms is to be found a wide range of texts expressing all facets of human religious aspiration; their literal sense ranges from direct address of the Father to subjective reflection of religious experience, from curse to praise, from desolation to exaltation, from history to prophesy, from the ceremonial to the personal. Their spiritual sense, enriched by the tradition of Christian interpretation, sees them as types and allegories, as a prophetic book fulfilled in Christ, as the voice of Christ addressing the Father or the voice of the Church addressing Christ, as the summary of all doctrine.[7] Their place among the scriptures assured believers of their orthodoxy when heretics were fabricating their own songs.

One hundred fifty psalms is a relatively small number, limited enough that it can be the subject of thorough familiarity. In the context of the divine office it is (or, at least, was) said completely each week. This *cursus* of the entire psalter formed a repertory of commonly known texts from which particular texts were drawn. A thorough comprehension of the psalmody of the Mass requires a knowledge of the whole Psalter recited *in toto* on a periodic basis.

The placement of the psalms throughout the liturgy shows a consciousness of the Psalter as an entity, for they occur in the Office and in the Mass partly in some kind of numerical order. Against a backdrop of a general numerical plan, there is also a certain thematic placement of the psalms. The most notable are certain texts for Holy Week, whose order seems to have been transferred from the Hebrew high holy days.[8] The office of Lauds

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[7] Pierre Salmon, O.S.B., "The Interpretation of the Psalms during the Formative Period of the Divine Office," in *The Breviary through the Centuries* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1962), pp. 42–61.

[8] Erich Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 160.

does not observe the numerical ordering, and by that fact has a unique character among the hours. In the Mass, the thematic ordering of psalms prevails for the major days of the year, but certain of the propers for Lent and after Pentecost show an order derived from the *cursus* of the Psalter. The result is a delicate balance between specific themes and the entire subject matter of the Psalter.

It has been an almost universal error of scholars to equate the psalm with its text. The psalms are and always have been essentially sung pieces. The liturgical usage of the psalms includes ways of singing that go back to Hebrew practices. The relationship of Gregorian chant to Hebrew melodies has been explored by two great Jewish scholars. The first, Abraham Z. Idelsohn, recorded melodies of Hebrew congregations of Yemen and Babylonia, who are presumed to have been cut off from outside contact since the destruction of the second temple.[9] Eric Werner, in *The Sacred Bridge*, explored in detail correspondences between Jewish and Christian liturgical music.[10]

There are two specific ways of singing the psalms in the western Church. These are recitative psalmody and melodic psalmody, sometimes called *accentus* and *concentus*. Recitative psalmody, psalm tones, is found primarily in the divine office. Psalmody is the essential purpose of the Office; there the singing of the psalms is in itself a liturgical activity. Thus the purpose of the psalm tones is a simple, sensitive declamation of the text. The melodies used are probably ancient. They show a common procedure of intonation, mediation and conclusion. Compare a Yemenite psalm tone with Gregorian psalm tone 1f:[11]



[9] *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, 8 vols. (Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1922–1932); *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929).

[10] Werner, *Sacred Bridge,* p. 160.

[11] Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 63 #9; *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclee, 1961), p. 113.

Melodic psalmody, the setting of psalm texts to discrete melodies, is found in the antiphons and responsories of the Mass and Office. There they serve an essentially different function: they are the textual and musical complement to another action; they accompany a procession or provide a contemplative counterbalance to the reading of a lesson or the recitation of a psalm. The purpose is not simply to set forth the text, but rather to provide music proportioned to the activity which it accompanies. Mass psalmody spans a continuum from nearly syllabic to very melismatic, and the difference from Communion, Introit, Offertory, to Gradual and Alleluia is one of the character of the action. Those pieces that accompany the most motion are the most syllabic; those which accompany the least motion, and require the most recollection are the most melismatic. The almost purely musical function of the Graduals and the Alleluias is particularly interesting. The place of melisma was known to the early church as *jubilare*, sheer wordless jubilation. It is the function of the Gradual and Alleluia to elevate the minds of the hearers in such a way that when the Gospel is sung they are in a perfectly recollected state, and thus open to hearing the Gospel. My observation has been that when a Gradual or Alleluia is sung impeccably and beautifully, a congregation is totally silent and recollected, ready to hear the singing of the Gospel, which rightly has the role of the culmination of the entire fore-Mass.[12]

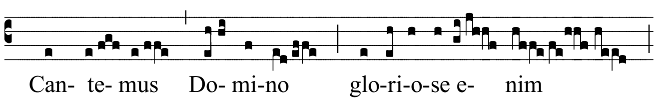
An important feature of the responsorial chants, especially the Graduals and Tracts, is that they are based upon a limited number of melodic formulae. Although a specific Gradual is complex in composition, it shares the same basic melodic material with a number of other Graduals. This has a two-fold advantage: it enables the singer to master the material, and to sing the pieces well; for the listener, each piece will be based upon material already familiar and so he is prepared to hear the pieces well.

[12] This is not the case in the new rite when the congregation is asked to repeat a refrain by rote to the monotonous, or worse, histrionic, recitation of a series of psalm verses by the same reader who recites the other lessons in the same tone of voice.

The Graduals and the Tracts, especially the Tracts, show a close connection with melismatic Hebrew psalmody. The process of centonization, the use of a limited repertory or melodic formulae, is quite like the Hebrew practice; the basic modes of the Tracts, II and VIII, resemble the mode of the Hebrew Haftara;[13] certain melodic formulae show striking resemblance to Hebrew melodies. The Yemenite eulogy of the Haftara has this melody:[14]



Compare it with a mode VIII Tract:[15]



The antiquity and continuity of these pieces is also suggested by the fact that their texts are based upon the pre-Vulgate version of the Psalter.

An interesting feature of the propers of the Mass is that for any particular type of piece (Gradual, Introit, etc.) there is no more than one version for one text. Many texts are used more than once, but almost always with the same melody. Thus there is an identification of text, function, and melody.

In addition to psalmody, there are two important types of non-psalmodic music which have their roots in the earliest Christian liturgies. The first of these is the melodies of the celebrant. Like the psalm-tones, their function is the clear setting forth of the text; they do this by simply realizing its grammatical structure. In their simplest form, they reflect a process of an elevated recitation very little different from what might be notated when someone raises his voice in prayer. They, too, range from

[13] Werner, *Sacred Bridge,* p. 520.

[14] Werner, *Sacred Bridge,* p. 519.

[15] *Liber Usualis*, p. 776R.

simple to complex, and the differences serve to characterize and differentiate the degree of solemnity of the various priest's parts. The musical function of these tones is to provide a continuity of sung tone to the entire service.

In recent times the lessons from the Scripture have often been simply spoken and not sung to a musical tone, on the grounds that it is not in the nature of a reading to have it sung. The great scholars of Hebrew music have some interesting historical information which bears upon this. Idelssohn says that the reading from the Bible without musical tone in the Hebrew service stems only from a reform which began in 1815; the Talmud says that the public readings from the Bible must be made "in a sweet musical tune. And he who reads the Pentateuch without tune shows disregard for it and the vital value of its laws."[16] Eric Werner cites the passage in Luke 4:16–20, where Jesus read a Messianic prophesy from the book of Isaias in the synagogue, and afterward, in the manner of a homily, declared it to be fulfilled then and there. He says that "that reading or chanting was probably performed in the way a Tract is chanted today, only in a much simpler manner."[17] A feature of the traditional liturgy was that it was all sung; I know of no historical precedent for the modern mixture of spoken and sung elements.[18]

The second class of non-psalmodic music is the Ordinary of the Mass. These pieces, too, are essentially liturgical actions in themselves. Whether praise, petition, or confession of belief, they do not accompany any other liturgical activity. This is the proper ground for the assignment of these chants to the entire congregation,

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[16] Idelsohn, *Jewish Music,* p. 35. Idelsohn here refutes the notion that such singing derived from the general manner of public reading in the Orient, "for in the Orient the usual public reading is done in declamation as in the Occident."

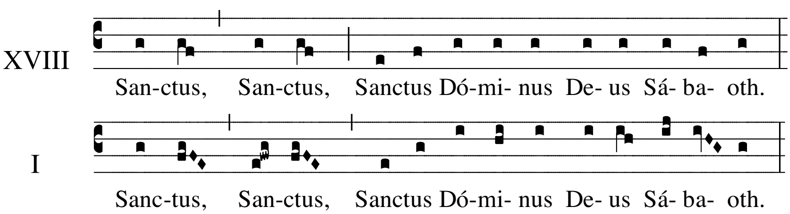
[17] Werner, *Sacred Bridge,* p. 553; see also Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 38.

[18] This poses a problem for present practice, since certain elements and rubrics in the new rite seem to have been conceived in terms of the low Mass. They can be sung, but this introduces an undesirable imbalance into the service, and the recitative-like settings of some of the congregation's parts do not provide a sufficient rhythmic basis for the people to sing together; likewise, speaking the lessons in the vernacular destroys the basis of the complementarity of sung lesson and responsorial chant which is essential to the structure of the whole fore-Mass.

although their singing by the congregation was by no means a consistent feature of their history, even from earliest times.

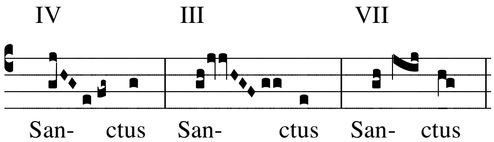
The unchanging nature of the texts of the Ordinary allowed them to be the basis of an extensive and diverse repertory of melodies. The work of Bruno Stäblein and his students in collecting and indexing the melodies of the Ordinary has made some statistics available.[19] The extant manuscripts which he has collected from all over continental Europe, contain the following repertory: 226 Kyrie melodies, 56 Gloria, 230 Sanctus, and 267 Agnus Dei melodies, in about five hundred manuscripts. Thus, in striking contrast to the propers, where a single text hardly ever received a new setting, the Ordinary of the Mass was the subject of continuing new composition.

In the midst of this plethora of melodies, however, there are some fundamentals. Certain Sanctus melodies clearly relate to the Preface tone; scholars have often seen this as a sign of the antiquity of Sanctus XVIII; but the Sanctus melodies of mode IV all bear a close resemblance to the Preface tone because of the pentatonic formula EGac which they have in common; this is also true of the intonation of Sanctus XI. Some melodies can be seen to be elaborate versions of others. The beginning of Sanctus I might be seen to be a more elaborate version of Sanctus XVIII:



[19] This is published in four doctoral dissertations from the University of Erlangen: Margareta [Landwehr-] Melnicki, *Das einstimmige Kyrie des lateinischen Mittelalters* (Forschungsbeiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, #1; Regensburg; Bosse, 1954; Detlev Bosse, *Untersuchung einstimmiger mittelalterlicher Melodien zum "Gloria In Excelsis Deo,"* (Forschungsbeiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, #2; Regensburg: Bosse, 1954); Peter Josef Thannabauer, *Das einstimmige Sanctus der römischen Messe in der handschriftlichen Überlieferung vom 10. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Erlanger Arbeiten zur Musikwissenschaft, Band 1; München: Walter Ricke, 1962); Martin Schildbach, *Das einstimmige Agnus Dei und seine handschriftliche Überlieferung vom 10. bis. 16. Jahrhundert* (1967).

Likewise, the intonation of Sanctus IV relates to that of III and VII:



Many Sanctus melodies make use of a triadic formulation, either in the intonation or at "Pleni sunt coeli." These striking common melodic features show a certain communality of procedures among the melodies.

The earliest Credo melodies are also related in a similar fashion. Those Credos of the current Roman Gradual which date from before the 15th century are all attributed to mode IV, and show close melodic resemblances.

The melodies for the Ordinary were notated considerably later than those of the propers. However they are not necessarily of more recent composition. If the initial stages of notation are understood as a mnemonic aid to an essentially oral practice, it will be clear why proper chants, sung once a year, would have needed to have been written down much earlier than those of the Ordinary, which were repeated many times in a year. Furthermore, scholars have observed that some melodies which are notated the earliest are the more elaborate, while some notated later are simpler. This would tend to complicate the commonplace estimation that the simpler melodies are earlier; on the other hand, it could be only the result of the necessity to notate the most complex melodies earlier.

If the earlier melodies can be the more elaborate, what does that say about whether they were sung by a congregation? The assumption that only the simplest melodies would have been sung by the congregation rests upon a fundamental oversight: if an oral tradition of long standing can support the memorization of entire epic poems, it can certainly support the singing of a few elaborate melodies. Furthermore the elaborate melodies have a greater intrinsic musical interest which sustains regular repetition. My experience with an intelligent, but rather mobile congregation under less than optimal conditions, is that they are capable of

singing three cycles of the more elaborate melodies in the course of a year.[20]

There is yet one more fundamental aspect of the Ordinary of the Mass. In spite of the large number of melodies in the total repertory, a surprisingly small number of melodies recur in a majority of the manuscripts over the entire span of centuries and countries. If consistently wide-spread usage of a melody is any indication of its universality and authenticity, then approximately eight Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei melodies form a fundamental nucleus canonized by extensive usage. The dissertations done by the students of Bruno Stäblein yield the following results: of the Kyrie melodies, the most prominent are IV (*Cunctipotens*), I (*Lux et origo*), and XI (*Orbis factor*); Gloria IV is by far the most prevalent, with the melodies *Ad libitum* I, IX, I, XV, XIV, XI, and II of about equal frequency; the most frequent Sanctus melodies are XVII, IV, and XV; Agnus Dei, IV, II, and XVII. The complete cycles which include the most frequently found melodies are IV (by far the most prevalent), II, I, XI, XV, XVI, and IX in that order.[21] This tabulation could be used as a criterion in the selection of cycles to be sung.[22]

The current Roman *Kyriale* includes some melodies which are found in very few sources, and an occasional piece not found in any source in Stäblein's extensive archive; nevertheless, to the credit of the compilers, though they did not have the benefit of Stäblein's statistics, every one of the eight most frequent melodies for each part of the Ordinary was included.

The proper and ordinary chants already discussed formed the foundation upon which an edifice of an entirely different sort of chant was built: the non-scriptural chants of newly invented text and melody, which were added by way of expansion and elaboration

[20] Cf. William Peter Mahrt, "The Gregorian High Mass and its Place in the University," *Sacred Music*, CI, #1 (Spring, 1974), pp. 10–16.

[21] A tabulation of the statistics from the dissertations cited above has been included as a table on page 113.

[22] Frequency of occurrence in the manuscripts suggests that Mass IV be given particular consideration; the compilers of the proposed *Liber Cantualis Internationalis* might consider this cycle for this reason.

to the original corpus—Tropes and Sequences. Their function is that of adding new comment to the old pieces. Their texts are highly imaginative, showing a marked contrast to the psalms; their meters and rhymes are sometimes intricate and elaborate, sometimes obvious and forceful. They are much more earthbound and belong more characteristically to a specific medieval literary culture; they provided a timely balance and commentary to the more timeless, stable elements of the liturgy. As metric texts, they have precedent in the hymns of the Office, going back as early as St. Ambrose. That they were a less fundamental stratum of liturgical music is demonstrated by the fact that as result of the Council of Trent, all the tropes and all but a few of the most well-loved sequences were removed.

Thus the repertory of liturgical plainsong for the Mass consists of three basic levels of *fundamenta*: the propers, which as a group are well-established and fixed; the ordinaries, some of which have achieved a certain fundamental status, though they admit of new music as well; and the metric pieces, which represent expansion and commentary admitting of almost complete replacement or elimination.

The performance of Gregorian chant shows another interesting juxtaposition of fundament and variable. On the one hand, the sequence of pitches has a consistency that allows us to trace the tradition back two millennia. On the other hand, the rhythm of chant has varied considerably over its history. The Yemenite melodies notated by Idelssohn show very specific rhythmic shapes. Gregorian chant may have also had specific rhythms at one time. Its first notated versions did not completely specify rhythm, but did include certain rhythmic signs. Whether these signs meant a slight inflection of a basically even rhythms or a durational kind of rhythm, whether they came from antiquity or were an innovation remain questions for scholars today. In either case, they represent a rhythmic interpretation which was later lost. Chant became *cantus planus,* plainsong, essentially even notes. This was its prevailing rhythm for the high and late middle ages.

Most notable about Gregorian chant as plainsong is that while theoretically the notes are equal, they are subject to inflection and

variation. Each age, while keeping the essential pitch structures, has had its opportunity to reshape the rhythm of the plainsong according to its own view. For example, it seems clear that it was sung very slowly in the fifteenth century.[23] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some of it was shaped by word rhythms.[24] With the Solesmes revival, the present rhythmic conception, that of duple or triple groupings, allowed for a more spirited tempo. The interpretations of Dom Mocquereau, so sensitive and refined, are an interesting manifestation of a romantic approach to rhythm. Performances today, in spite of the predominance of the Solesmes method, show markedly different approaches to rhythm. For example, the recorded performances of chant from Beuron show a beautiful reserve and austerity so characteristic of much twentieth century music and art; those of Einsiedeln at times show a sense of proportioned rhythms that are a fascination for some composers of this century. The singing of Konrad Ruhland's Capella Antiqua shows a propensity for a rhythmic inequality that sometimes approaches the modal rhythms of the Ars Antiqua; it is no accident that they specialize in singing the music of the Ars Antiqua.

Variations in style can also reflect something of the character of the language of the singers. Solesmes recordings are so beautifully French in the suavity and gentleness of the declamation. Beuron is characteristically German in the clear projection of accent and clarity of pronunciation. Einsiedeln shows a rhythmic liveliness that is analogous to the colorful declamation of the Swiss dialect. The singing of plainsong is not a simple replication of a totally prescribed rhythm; the projection of its rhythm and phrasing requires a great deal of individual talent, insight, and temperament.

Gregorian chant was not only the historical predecessor of a great development of polyphonic music; it was also the actual

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[23] Mother Thomas More, "The Performance of Plainsong in the Later Middle Ages and the Sixteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, XCII (1965–66), pp. 129–134.

[24] N. A. Janssen, *Les vrais principes du chant grégorien* (Malines: P. J. Hanicq, 1845), p. 14.

structural basis of the better part of medieval and renaissance sacred music. One could chart this history in great detail, but more interesting are the ways in which it played the role of a fundamentum, and the part it played in the development of a polyphonic fundamentum.

From the high Middle Ages onward, there existed a polyphonic sacred music which used the materials and even the thought processes of each age. A creative interaction between the traditional fundamentals of sacred music and the ideas of the time is a hallmark of the entire history. If at times it seems that the ideas of the time prevailed, it must not be forgotten that polyphonic sacred music always existed in the context of some kind of performance of Gregorian chant as chant.

The construction of medieval polyphonic music reflected the general medieval will to gloss. The traditional data always formed the point of departure, the scripture text in a commentary, the citation of authorities in philosophy, the conventionalized subject matters in painting; the elaboration of these was often extensive, far exceeding the implications of the original. Similarly, the Gregorian melodies formed the basis for elaboration, an elaboration which took shape according to the aesthetic of the particular time. The culture being still an oral one, the additions were, at the beginning, essentially unwritten, improvised.

The first known sung additions to chant melodies were called organum, probably because they represented the manner in which the organ might be played in two parts.[25] As an unwritten practice, parallel organum can be said to be improvised only in a limited sense, since it involves only one decision—where to begin; it could be sung by choirs.

The first real manner of improvisation involves the addition of a second voice in like rhythm to the Gregorian melody, with at least some non-parallel motion. To do this requires some judgment on the part of the singer, and it implies that there be only

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[25] Cf. Jean Perrot, *The Organ from Its Invention in the Hellenistic Period to the End of the Thirteenth Century*; tr. Norma Deane (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 287–291.

one on a part; in other words, it is not music for a choir, but for soloists. It is often described in treatises; it was less often notated in practical examples, because it was neither so difficult as to demand being notated, nor excellent to demand being preserved. It seems to have been a rather common practice for a long time, especially away from the centers of the most sophisticated and developed music. It served the function of adding a sonorous complement to the melody; it made its way into written compositions of the fifteenth century as fauxbourdon.

Thus the division of roles between cantors and choir made possible a new development. The choir would sing its parts in unison, while the cantors, being the most experienced singers, would be able to improvise in separate parts. This division was at the root of the entire repertory of Notre Dame organa; those parts of the Gregorian chants assigned to cantors were sung in elaborate polyphony based upon the chant melody. Those parts which were assigned to the choir were sung as simple melodies. Cantors, being the most capable musicians, often had the function of playing the organ, and it is a small step for their improvisation actually to be played on the organ, in alternation with the choir.

There followed an extensive development of *alternatim* music. Its most common form came to be the organ Mass: the melodies of the Ordinary of the Mass performed in alternative chant and organ settings. In the 16th century, the pattern of the organ Mass still bore the traces of the cantor's function, since the organ rather consistently began the performance, exercising the intoning function of the cantor. The practice was canonized by the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600, and survived in some churches into the present century. It has sometimes been called abusive, on the grounds that it suppresses about half of the text of the Mass. But the text is hardly suppressed, for when the melody and text are familiar enough, simply by hearing the melody, the text comes to mind for the listener. Thus the proper liturgical basis of the alternatim organ Mass is the commonly known and understood repertory of liturgical melodies.

Alternatim practice was maintained for polyphonic singing, as well, and some polyphonic hymns represent this practice, alternating monophonic and polyphonic music for voices. There is a

third possibility in alternatim practice that has been most often overlooked: it is also possible to alternate polyphonic organ playing with polyphonic singing. I have shown in at least one case, the alternating Masses of Heinrich Isaac, that this was the intended manner of performance.[26] The performance of a Kyrie, for example, would consist of a polyphonic setting of the Kyrie melody played on the organ, followed by a polyphonic setting for the choir, and then one for the organ. The choir would sing Christe, then the organ, then the choir, and so forth. Here again, the chant basis of the entire setting provides a rationale and continuity.

Alternating settings for polyphonic choir and monophonic chant have been written in recent times, with the possibility of including the participation of the congregation in the singing of the chant; for example, that by Hermann Schroeder.

While the alternating elaboration of the chant gave rise to a specifically liturgical form, the Notre Dame school also established the basis for general polyphonic music for the succeeding centuries in the treatment of the chant melodies as *cantus firmus*.

Notre Dame organa are typical Gothic creations; Gothic art strives to establish a clarity of organization both by the use of numerical proportions as the structural base, and by the creation of a hierarchical order among the elements. In the discant style of Notre Dame music, the Gregorian melody is given to the tenor and placed in a strict rhythmic order—a rationalized base. A new melody is set to this, differentiated from the tenor in that it moves more quickly. Thus a hierarchy of voices is established.

The motets of the Ars Antiqua, although they are on the whole not liturgical music, develop this procedure. A rather small number of Gregorian melodies serves as the basis for a very extensive repertory of motets. The function of these melodies is clearly as a conventional base sufficiently familiar to listeners to allow an appreciation of what is done in the various pieces. The added voices are differentiated rhythmically one from the other, leaving the tenor as the basis, and extending the principle of hierarchical organization.

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[26] *The "Missae ad Organum" of Heinrich Isaac* (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1969).

The music of the fourteenth century developed the scheme of a rationalized organization of the Gregorian melody, but extended the rationalization to all the parts of the piece. The result, total isorhythm, was an extraordinarily complex procedure whose beautiful sonority is accessible to all listeners, but whose tight intellectual structure is sometimes inscrutable to all but the most experienced. This reflects the state of the culture of the fourteenth century when, in the face of a divided church, a division of theology and philosophy, and the skepticism of nominalism, simple truths seemed hidden by the hopeless complexities of the world.

The rationalized *cantus firmus* has a direct heir in the cyclic Mass of the late-fifteenth century. Here the question of the relation of the familiar fundament to a highly developed structure is of another order. A cyclic Mass of Dufay or Obrecht uses a given melody as the same basis for each of the five movements of the Ordinary of the Mass. Thus, while each movement may be shaped somewhat differently, there is an accumulation of familiarity with the basic material, so that by the fourth and fifth movements, the listener has become so aware of the nature of the material that he can unself-consciously appreciate the sophisticated treatment of these movements. The Sanctus and Agnus Dei are here the locus of the best and most telling devices of composition, and so they serve a liturgical function by emphasizing these high points of the Mass.

The somewhat equal treatment of each movement of the ordinary based upon the same melody is an essentially renaissance procedure. The renaissance valued balance and proportion. While the gothic elaboration of music took place at that one musical point before the Gospel, the renaissance movements were distributed throughout the service, creating a rondo-like recurrence of polyphonic music that set the whole service in a kind of balance.[27]

During the course of the renaissance, the *cantus firmus* became the object of an equalization of voices, a process which

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[27] It is perhaps not advisable, then, to substitute a chant Credo sung by the congregation for the polyphonic Credo which forms an integral part of the cycle; on the grounds of furthering the participation of the congregation, the form of the work is truncated, and the participation of the congregation by hearing well the two most important movements is impaired.

formed the transition to a purely imitative style. While the tenor voice still carried the Gregorian melody, it was no longer in long notes, but in values more equivalent to those of other voices.

The other voices also imitated the *cantus firmus*. It is only a short step from such equalization of voices to a thoroughly imitative texture. When motets were written upon liturgical texts which had proper Gregorian melodies, these melodies were incorporated into the points of imitation; this manner of treating the chant is called paraphrase, and it is partly in the context of paraphrase that the imitative style develops.

It is notable that the psalms played a role in the development of the imitative style. An extensive psalm text has no proper Gregorian melody to be used as a *cantus firmus*; the psalm tones seem not to have been suitable. Josquin Desprez, whose motets usually include Gregorian melodies, wrote psalm motets in the same imitative style, but with no Gregorian melody as the basis, and in a more thoroughly imitative style. The motets of Josquin set the pattern for the development through the sixteenth century of the classical motet style, culminating in the works of Palestrina.

Two important features of the baroque era relate to the use of sacred music. First is the use of the *basso continuo*. The performance of chant adapted itself to this practice. One finds bass lines written with figures for the use of an organist who would accompany the chant.[28] The remarkable difference between these continuo parts and recent organ accompaniments is that there is a bass note and a harmony for every single note of the chant. It is clear from this context that such a performance would leave the Gregorian melody at a very slow tempo. To some extent this may explain the simplifications made by the revisors of the Medici Gradual; the result is like an accompanied aria.

The second feature of the baroque era is the self-conscious juxtaposition of new and old music. The *prima prattica* involved

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[28] Cf. Leo Söhner, *Die Geschichte der Begleitung des gregorianischen Chorals in Deutschland vornehmlich im 18. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen der gregorianischen Akademie zu Freiburg in der Schweiz, #16; Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1931).

the traditional, controlled styles of counterpoint, *cantus firmus* and the imitative style. The *seconda prattica* involved the new style, with unprepared dissonance, concertato use of instruments, and highly affective expression. The old imitative style did not go out of use, but it was placed in a special position where it became the style of church music, *par excellence*; thus the renaissance created it and the baroque canonized it as the *stile antico*, the proper ecclesiastical style. It is not that new styles were not written in church music, it is rather that the *stile antico* became the fundamental polyphonic style of church music, to which was added newer music. This distinction has remained into recent times in the Roman documents which name three levels of church music—chant, classical polyphony, and modern music.

The *stile antico* was an important feature of church music in the eighteenth century, even though the music absorbed operatic and concert idioms. The works of Michael and Joseph Haydn, and of Mozart hold the *stile antico* as a valuable tradition, and develop it, particularly in the fugues of the Gloria and Credo movements of their Masses. The number of Gregorian melodies that are incorporated into the music of Michael Haydn demonstrate the extent to which there was a creative interchange between the fundamental levels of church music.

The relation to traditional church music for Bruckner is a rich one; in his Masses and motets one finds quite conscious use of Gregorian melodies, of *stile antico*, of the affective depiction of ideas from the baroque, all reinterpreted in the harmonic language of the late 19th century.

For 18th and 19th century secular music, the fundamental levels of church music served as topics to recall ideas associated with church music; the *Dies Irae* was probably the most frequently used chant melody; the ecclesiastical style was used as a special reference by composers of secular music from Mozart on.

Characteristic of the romantic movement was a renewed interest in the past. Although the works of Palestrina and plainsong continued to be sung in some of the more traditionally oriented churches, it is not often realized that Palestrina, as well as Bach, was the subject of an enthusiastic revival by Mendelssohn. Likewise, Gregorian chant itself was revived and renewed, and this led directly to the production of the present Roman books of chant.

The revival of a broad spectrum of historical styles in the twentieth century has spawned an approach to the composition of music which consciously adapts these styles. While Stravinsky's Mass comes closest in style to the concerted Mass of the 18th century, it contains momentary references to chant, organum, 14th century figurative counterpoint, and even 19th century Russian homophonic music. Hermann Schroeder's alternatim Mass contains polyphonic parts which are an original adaptation of the conductus style Mass movements of the 14th century.

The final role played by Gregorian chant is that of *a locus topicus* in the theory of music; it was something held in common which served as a basis for instruction and disputation. Theoretical treatises principally through the 16th century, but also often into the 18th century, began their discussions with topics related to Gregorian chant—solmization, species of intervals, and modes. Most of the discussion from the 15th century concerning matters of definition and change of mode, of particular importance for polyphonic music, were discussed and exemplified in terms of chant melodies. The story of Guido of Arezzo's invention of solmization syllables out of the hymn *Ut queant laxis* is recounted and his technique faithfully taught. In fact, when theorists decided that it was necessary to add another syllable to Guido's six, they returned to the hymn, and found that the last line "Sancte Johannes" yielded the initials SI, the seventh syllable.

The main articulating feature of the music of the polyphonic period is the cadence—in its classical 16th century form, the *clausula vera*—in which each separate voice makes a characteristic progression. The leading voice is the tenor which progresses 2–1, a progression which derived from the fact that the tenor was traditionally a Gregorian melody, which descended to its final by step. Against this the discant progressed to the octave, the bass to the octave below, the alto to the fifth or the third. Each of these progressions grew out of the function of a successive complement to the Gregorian cadence.

The study of composition has traditionally included writing in the *stile antico*. Basic to this instruction was the setting of counterpoint to a *cantus firmus*, at least hypothetically a Gregorian melody. Indeed the Italian name for plainsong came to be *canto*

fermo on these grounds. Students of composition today are often given Gregorian melodies as models of melodic construction, both for the composition of melody as such and as examples of good melodic style to be employed in counterpoint.

We have seen the several fundamental roles which Gregorian chant has played in western musical culture: as the main musical foundation of the first millennium, it has contained within it certain fundamentals which remained constant while being the basis of the development of a more extensive repertory; as the structural basis of polyphonic music in alternation and as *cantus firmus*, it has participated in a creative interaction with the ideas of each age; as the paraphrase basis of the imitative style, it has helped to spawn a canonized polyphonic fundament; the recent history of sacred music has been one of the development of concerted music in which chant and the imitative style have formed traditional points of contact which have, at the same time, consecrated the secular style; it has been a basis for the teaching of music.

What can be concluded from the history just described? The most important lesson of this history is the permanent value of those fundamental things held in common by the culture and received from tradition. It is a cultural necessity that there be a basis of common action; it is a religious necessity that there be a continuity with the historical Church, and relationship with a living tradition.

History also shows, however, that the elements of tradition, while preserving their fundamentals, admit innovation, and indeed play a vital and creative role in consecrating the elements of the ongoing secular culture. What history does not sanction is a radical break with the fundamentals of the tradition, nor does it provide any valid precedent for the desecration of the sacred; secular music, in order to play a cultic role must be consecrated by an interaction with the sacred tradition.

For the continuation of this sacred tradition, I suggest the following program:

> 1. The cultivation of a Gregorian liturgy, Mass and Office, in cathedral, seminary, and monastic churches, including the cycle of propers intact, certain fundamental settings of the Ordinary, and special attention to Holy Week.

2. The cultivation of polyphonic repertories in major city and university churches, sung in the context of Gregorian elements.

3. The cultivation of some essential common Gregorian repertory in parish churches.

4. The encouragement of new works which bear a direct and complementary relationship to the fundamental repertory, and which serve the purposes of communality and excellence.

These suggestions are matters of culture. A regulation from a ministry of agriculture will not cause a field to grow and flourish. Ecclesiastical legislation of itself cannot bring about these aims. Yet neither can they flourish in an adverse climate of discouragement and disapproval. If we are to be successful in our art, we must be encouraged to cultivate the traditional soil; only then can a proper body of new music also grow up.

There are yet certain aspects of the present culture about which history has little to say. Twentieth century European culture in some respects has modified its progressive stance. In the face of two world wars, it has recognized that not all changes are progress; in the area of music it admits the best works from the past along with new works. This change ought to be favorable to the cultivation of the fundamental repertory of sacred music. It has however had some undesirable effects as well; it has favored a kind of eclecticism and individualism that has been detrimental to the unity of the culture. This, together with the rise of the commercial media, has encouraged an undesirable rift in the artistic sphere between what is held in common and what is the object of the cultivation of excellence. Popular idioms are voraciously devoured and ruined by commercial interests; the tradition of excellence in new works is mainly in the realm of the *avant garde*, whose individualistic and sometimes nihilistic aesthetic is no basis of communality. This is a cultural problem, a dichotomy that must be addressed by men of culture, whether they be Christian or not.

A final and encouraging aspect of history is that it is not made until it happens; while it can give us norms for the future, and set patterns which may continue, there is no inevitable course of history. It is subject to human choice and industry, as well as the operation of the grace of God among men.

Melodies of the Ordinary of the Mass

Order of Frequency	Number in Grad Rom	Number of Sources	Historical Span of Sources (centuries)	Number in MS Index
KYRIE				
1	IV	340	11–18th	18
2	I	322	11–18th	39
3	XI, ad lib X	309	11–18th	16
4	XVI	283	10–18th	217
5	II	281	11–18th	48
6	XIV	275	10–18th	68
7	XII	235	11–18th	58
8	IX, X	234*	12–18th	171
GLORIA				
1	IV	248	10, 11–18th	56
2	Ad lib I	167	10, 11–18th	24
3	IX	166	12–18th	23
4	I	164	10, 11–18th	12
5	XV	163	10, 11–18th	43
6	XIV	152	10, 11–18th	11
7	XI	144	10, 11–18th	51
8	II	133*	12–17th	19
SANCTUS				
1	XVII	321	11–18th	32
2	IV	311	11–18th	49
3	XV	255	11–18th	223
4	XVIII	158	11–18th	41
5	II	157	12 1/2–18th	203
6	XII	108	13–18th	177
7	VIII	100*	12–18th	166
AGNUS DEI				
1	IV	328	11–17th	136
2	II	310	11–17th	226
3	XVII	291	11–17th	34
4	XV	272	11–17th	209
5	XVIII	212	11–17th	101
6	IX	173*	12–17th	114

*The next most frequently found Kyrie melody is found in 127 sources; the next Gloria, in 81; Sanctus, 68; and Agnus Dei, 80.

6

GREGORIAN CHANT AS A PARADIGM OF SACRED MUSIC

We could all agree that the liturgy should be beautiful, yet this is a question that rarely receives much attention, and this lack of attention has meant that some important aspects of the role of music have been forgotten. But what constitutes the beauty of the liturgy? What, even, do we mean by "beauty" in the context of the liturgy? The scholastics gave complementary definitions of beauty, "those things which when seen please,"[1] and "splendor formae."[2] The first describes what happens when beauty is apprehended—delight; the second gets at what it is that delights us—showing forth in a clear and radiant way the very nature of the thing. In the liturgy, music has a fundamental role in showing forth its nature, a role which traditional liturgical documents support.

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[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1947), Pt. 1, Q. 5, Art. 4, Reply Obj. 1; Vol. I, p. 26.

[2] St. Albert the Great, *De pulchro et bono*, I, 2c; cf. Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, tr. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 45, 234; and Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, tr. J. F. Scanlon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 20.

One of the most fundamental papal documents about sacred music is the motu proprio of St. Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini* of November 22, 1903. It contains formulations which have been the basis of papal statements ever since. In it, St. Pius gives three characteristics of sacred music; these are often summarized as holiness, beauty, and universality, but their specific wording is instructive. His statement is usually translated "Sacred music must, therefore, possess in the highest degree the qualities which characterize the liturgy. In particular it must possess holiness and beauty of form: from these two qualities a third will spontaneously arise—universality."[3] Yet this is not quite an accurate translation, for the original Italian reads "bontà delle forme," very literally, "excellence of forms" in the plural ("bonitate formarum" in the Latin text).[4] The plural is later evoked in a more explicit statement: "Each part of the Mass and the Office must keep, even in the music, that form and character which it has from tradition, and which is very well expressed in Gregorian chant. Therefore introits, graduals, antiphons, psalms, hymns, the *Gloria in excelsis*, etc., will be composed each in their own way."[5]

All three of St. Pius's qualities are intimately related to the music of the liturgy. *Holiness*: Music is an intrinsic part of the projection of the sacredness of the liturgy. "Sacred" means being set aside for a particular purpose, in the liturgy the establishment of its unique purposes, "the glorification of God and the edification and sanctification of the faithful." It does this in two important ways: By setting the texts of the liturgy to singing, even the prayers and lessons, it provides the entire liturgy an elevated tone of voice that conveys its special character, presenting its texts "as on a platter of gold," in the words of Fr. Jungmann.[6] The sense of the sacred is also conveyed by the fact that the music does not resem-

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[3] St. Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*, 2, in *Papal Teachings: The Liturgy*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, translated by the Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1962), pp. 179–80.

[4] *Acta sanctae sedis*, 36 (1903), pp. 332ff.

[5] *Tra le sollecitudini*, ¶10, p. 183.

[6] Josef Andreas Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, tr. Francis A. Brunner, 2 vols. (New York: Benziger, 1951, 1955), Vol. I, p. 409.

ble anything from the everyday world, but conveys the clear impression that what is taking place belongs to its own special realm.

Universality: Gregorian chant is universal in two different ways. By being a sacred musical language, it is supra national, accessible to those of any culture equally. But its traditional place in the sacred liturgy has always insured that the members of the Church grew up hearing this sacred musical language so that it was received naturally as a part of the liturgy.

Bontà delle forme: The sense of St. Pius's text surely admits a principal role for the beautiful in general. Indeed, the beauty of music is a crucial element in the "edification and sanctification of the faithful." Beauty is the glue that holds the truth and goodness to their tasks; to paraphrase Hans Urs von Balthasar, without beauty, the truth does not persuade, goodness does not compel.[7] Beauty is that which synthesizes diverse elements into a unity, and that is the general function of music in the liturgy, to draw together a diverse succession of actions into a coherent whole. Likewise, the beauty of music is capable of serving a range of sacred expressions, praise, lamentation, exaltation, and so forth. Still, I propose that St. Pius's wording has a more precise sense: the differentiation of forms is an essential part of the beauty of liturgical music; each chant has its own musical and textual form as it functions as an introit, gradual, and the like, and its liturgical beauty, its *splendor formae*, includes distinguishing that part from the others, while at the same time it projects a significant feature of that part itself.

Pope John Paul II has expressed this intimate connection between music and liturgical actions in his *Chirograph on the Centenary of the Motu Proprio*:

> Liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the Liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the Liturgy

[7] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics,* Vol. I: *Seeing the Form*, tr. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J. & John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), p. 19.

> for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite. The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God's marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow for the experience of human suffering which, however, faith opens to the prospect of Christian hope.[8]

The intimate relation of music and liturgy in Gregorian chant was proposed as a model by St. Pius X; to this end he articulated a specific rule: "the more closely a Church composition approaches Gregorian Chant in movement, inspiration, and feeling, the more holy and liturgical it becomes; and the more it deviates from this supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple."[9] This establishes Gregorian chant as a paradigm of sacred music—a model to which all other sacred music is to be compared. I shall attempt to demonstrate how this is so in the following.

It is sometimes said by well-meaning commentators that Gregorian chant is the ideal setting of its text; nothing could be farther from the mark, for each Gregorian genre shows a distinctly different manner of setting the text—each Gregorian chant is an ideal adaptation of its text to its specific liturgical purpose. This variety of text setting can be described in terms of two specific musical characteristics: syllabic density and melodic placement. By syllabic density, I mean how many notes occur on a syllable. This can be distinguished by four categories: (1) recitative—several syllables to a single pitch, as in a psalm tone; (2) syllabic—each syllable receives a single discrete note; (3) neumatic—several syllables receive a group of notes, two, or three, or sometimes a few more, a neume; and (4) melismatic—some individual syllables receive a long series of notes, a melisma. These differences

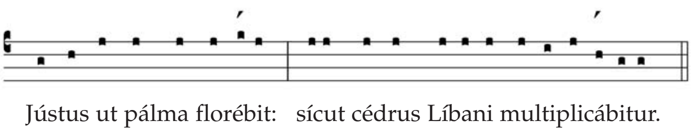
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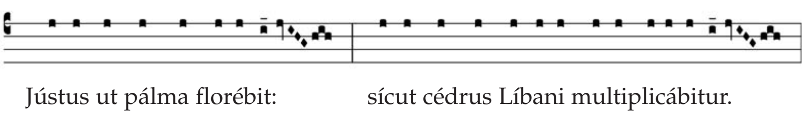
[8] John Paul, II, *Chirograph for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio "Tra le Sollecitudini" on Sacred Music*, November 22, 2003, ¶5 [http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musica-sacra_en.html]

[9] *Tra le sollecitudini*, ¶3, p. 180.

correspond to the different ways the music is important to the delivery of the text. For example, recitative—the reiteration of many syllables on a single pitch—is important when texts are to be delivered for their own sake, as in the psalms in the divine office or the lessons at Mass. On the other hand a melismatic style—many notes to certain few syllables—is important when the text is the basis for an effect of reflection and meditation, such as at the gradual of the Mass.

By melodic placement, I mean where important pitches or melismas fall in the text. Take for example two settings of the following psalm verse (Ps. 91:12):[10]



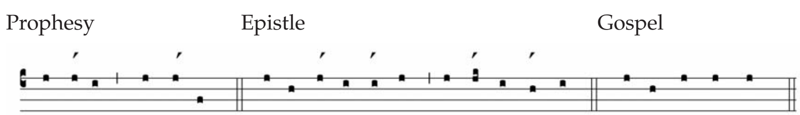


The first is the melody to which this verse might be sung as part of the singing of the whole psalm in the divine office. Aside from the recitative delivery of most of the text, the music makes an inflection on the last accented syllable of each half-line of the text, its cadence; the final cadence includes a preparatory inflection of two syllables before the accent. This takes account of what is intrinsic to the text; it articulates the bi-partite structure of the psalm text and allows for a fluid performance of a whole psalm without significant delay. The second melody is a setting of the same text as it is used as a versicle and response in the divine office. Here, the text serves a secondary purpose: its function is articulation—at the conclusion of a major section of the office, it functions like a musical semicolon or period. Now the melodic

[10] These melodies on this text were first discussed in Peter Wagner, *Gregorianische Formenlehre: Eine choralische Stilkunde*, *Einführung in die Gregorianischen Melodien: Ein Handbuch der Choralwissenschaft,* vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), pp. 7–13.

activity is added to the final unaccented syllable of the text; its function is decorative, and the slight prolongation of the unimportant syllable quietly emphasizes its decorative function. In the first melody, the melodic inflection underlines a significant aspect of the text—its cadence accent; in the second, the melisma is added to the text only when the text has been completely stated. This end-melisma is an important aspect of Gregorian music and can be seen in a number of different contexts below. Thus the music can underline the rhythm of the text by projecting its pattern of accented and unaccented syllables, or it can depart from the text by placing melismas upon the final unaccented syllables of words; the use of one or the other of these is a significant point of differentiation of the styles and thus of the liturgical function of Gregorian music.

Recitative is the style of the singing of the lessons for the Mass. This allows these texts to be projected clearly in a natural speech rhythm free from the exaggerated emphases sometimes heard from inexperienced readers; it projects the sacred character of the text and, through characteristic melodic patterns, differentiates the three kinds of lesson. These melodies consist of a reciting tone, with a cadence for the middle of a sentence and one for the end.[11]



For prophecies, the middle cadence descends a half step; the final cadence, a fifth. The descending cadences recall the slightly negative character of prophecy. The descent of a fifth imitates the call of a trumpet and suits the prophecy. The middle cadence, being only a half step, rings over in a live acoustic and projects a slight harshness, also a suitable character for a prophecy. The tone for an epistle has quite a different character, one that reflects

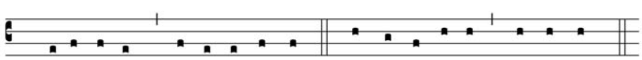
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[11] For the details of singing these lesson tones, see *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1962), pp. 102–107.

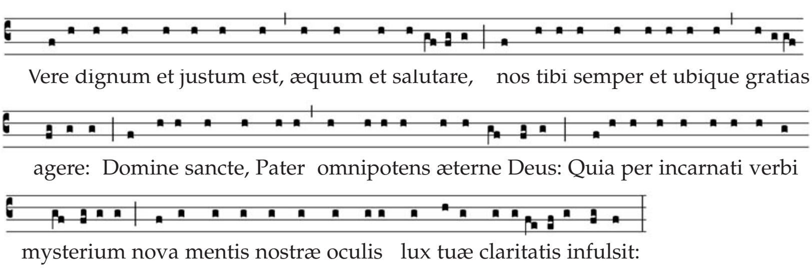
the hortatory tone of epistles, especially those of St. Paul. Its formulae are based upon the last two accented syllables, thus reflecting the pattern of a formal Latin cadence, and this is the basis of its rhetorical effect, suited to that of the epistle. The Gospel tone is surprisingly simple, having only an inflection for the end of a sentence. This inflection is independent of the accent of the text, falling on the fourth last syllable of the line, and its motion is ascending. The simplicity of this tone projects well the simplicity of the Gospel, and its independence from accent gives the rising cadence an element of elevation that perfectly suits its text. The succession of these three lection tones creates a sense of progression, the first whose cadences fall, the second, whose cadences rise more than they fall, and the third, whose cadences unambiguously rise, privileging the gospel as the culmination of the sequence of the lessons.

The tones for the prayers of the Mass set three quite different kinds of prayer: the collects, the preface, and the Lord's Prayer, and they do this by differentiating these three types in importance, progressing from a simple recitative style for the collects to a completely syllabic melody for the Lord's Prayer.

Collects: Ancient solemn tone Festal tone[12]



Preface:[13]



[12] For the details of singing these prayer tones, see *Liber*, pp. 98–102.

[13] *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2002), p. 156.

Lord's Prayer:[14]



The collects are bipartite texts with a close logical connection between the two clauses, following a general pattern, O God, who . . . , grant that . . . , with the petition relating to the attribute addressed in the first clause. This connection is expressed in the melodies, which at the cadence in the middle bring the tone around to the second clause. The ancient solemn tone makes use of a whole step formula, while the more modern festal tone uses a minor third inflection. Together, these two tones comprise the principal pitches of all the prayer melodies: G-a and a-b-c. The preface is a much more rhetorical prayer and more extended than the collects; its melody is also more rhetorical; while it is recitative in its projection of its texts, its cadences make use of neumes to create greater emphasis and motion at the cadences. The fact that the melody uses the same pitches as the collects makes it easy for the listener, without having to reflect upon it, to realize that this prayer has a continuity with those which went before, and yet, because its melody is more elaborate, that this prayer is more important. The Lord's Prayer makes use of the same vocabulary of pitches as the previous prayers; but this is a completely discrete melody, not just a recitation formula; it is almost entirely syllabic in its setting. Again, the common repertory of pitches makes the comparison evident: this, the most developed of the three prayer melodies, comes as a culmination of all of these prayers, that prayer taught by Our Lord himself, occurring upon the completion of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass.

The genre with the simplest syllabic style is that of the psalm antiphon in the divine office; one such antiphon sets the same Ps. 91:12 as illustrated above.[15]

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[14] *Missale Romanum*, p. 597.

[15] *Antiphonaire monastique, XIIe siècle, Codex 601 de la Bibliothèque caplitulaire de Lucques*, Paléographie musicale, IX (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1906; reprint, Berne: Herbert Lang & Cie., 1974), p. 524 [481].



The extensive repertory of psalm antiphons[16] represents a remarkable solution to a musico-liturgical problem. The problem is: what kind of music suits the singing of all hundred fifty psalms in a week? The historical answer is the Gregorian psalm tone: eight very simple recitative tones to which all the psalms are sung.[17] The simplicity of these tones means that the efficient singing of the psalms is not hindered by the need to pay much attention to the melodies; rather, they serve as a neutral medium for the elevated delivery of these texts by a community singing in common, answering back and forth antiphonally. Their bipartite structure neatly provides for the characteristic *parallelismus membrorum* of the typical psalm verse,[18] and their gentle rise and fall with a silent pause in the middle implies a motion of the soul upwards. The very neutral character of these melodies, though, suggests why there are antiphons to be sung before and after the performance of the whole psalm. These antiphons complement the neutral psalm tones by providing an interesting melody with a characteristic musical expression; what is lacking in melodic interest in the psalm tone is made up for by the antiphons. The antiphons themselves are for the most part quite modest melodies; in their proper place in the divine office, however, the musical complementarity they create is a unique feature of these offices.[19]

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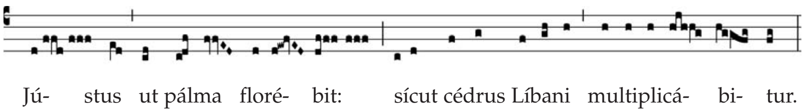
[16] The Roman antiphonary for the day hours contains 1256 antiphons; the night office, 483; *Antiphonale sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ pro diurnis horis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1949) and *Nocturnale Romanum: Antiphonale sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ pro nocturnis horis* (Cologne: Hartker Verlag, 2002).

[17] For example, the eighth tone shown above for Ps. 91:12. For the system of psalm tones, see *Liber,* pp. 112–118 and pp. 128–220.

[18] Cf. Eric Werner, "Psalm, I:3," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 15, p. 321; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[19] The intimate relation between musical style and liturgical function suggests that these psalm tones are not suitable for the responsorial psalm of the Mass, a topic I will return to in a later article.

The differences between Psalm antiphons and Mass propers can be seen by comparing this antiphon with four different Mass proper chants, each of which sets that same text. The introit Justus ut palma differs remarkably from the psalm antiphon:[20]



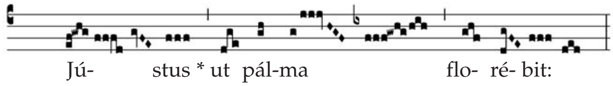
In the psalm antiphon, the purely syllabic style is exceeded only upon a few accented syllables, which thus receive a two-note neume; in the introit, the neumatic style prevails, some of the accented syllables receiving five or six notes, many receiving more than one. The music of the chant extends the performance of the text substantially, and upon reflection, one must conclude that something more solemn and important is happening at this point in the liturgy than during the psalm antiphon. Indeed, the introit chant accompanies the entrance of the ministers into the church, their approach to the altar as the place of the Mass, the central liturgical act of the day, and the marking of the altar as a sacred place by incensing it. This processional act consists of purposeful motions, and the music itself projects a sense of motion. The neumatic style is best suited to this: the accentuation of the text is heightened by neumatic motion, but the text moves continually through its syllables, at a solemn, but motion-filled pace. The overall contour of the melody projects a sense of motion as well, particularly at "sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur," where the melody rises from its lowest note to an octave higher upon the focal accent of the phrase, "ca-" of "multiplicabitur." Seeing these two settings of "Justus ut palma" in juxtaposition makes it clear that their musical styles are quite distinct and serve very different liturgical purposes.

The offertory chant based upon the same text shows yet a further distinction of liturgical and musical style:[21]

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[20] *Liber*, 1204.

[21] *Liber*, 1193.



Now the first syllable receives a melisma of twelve notes, and immediately the listener is alerted to a difference: this is a more extended chant even than the introit. Moreover, the last (unaccented) syllable of "palma" receives a melisma of sixteen notes. Here the principle of end-melisma is seen, and the chant departs slightly from its simple function of projecting the accent of the text; rather, the musical expression of the moment takes on a life of its own, the music departing ever so slightly from its text. In these circumstances, the expression is a more purely musical one. The differences between the introit and the offertory liturgically are two: the offertory precedes the more solemn part of the liturgy, and the motion at this point is much less than at the introit. True, the altar is incensed again, but if there is any procession, it is one of considerably less motion than at the introit. Rather, the mood at this point is one of greater reflection and introspection in preparation for the more solemn moments immediately to come. This more melismatic style perfectly reflects the mixture of processional motion with reflective anticipation characteristic of the offertory.

The truly melismatic chants, however, are the gradual and the alleluia. These serve a quite different purpose, complementing the singing of the lessons. The gradual on "Justus ut palma" shows a very different relation between melismas and the rest of the chant:[22]



Here several syllables follow in a row in recitation until the accented syllable "ré-" is reached, which then receives a melisma of eleven notes; these could have been distributed so that each syllable received a couple of notes; rather, the melisma is saved for

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[22] *Liber*, 1201.

the accent of the word "shall flourish." Likewise, "Libani" receives a longer melisma upon its final unaccented note—a perfect example of end melisma. The rest of the chant proceeds likewise: the final melisma of the respond is thirty-one notes long; melismas in the verse are up to thirty-seven notes long. In this very different melismatic style, the purpose must also be very different. My own observation about the gradual is that with the singing of these chants under optimal conditions, all ambient noise in the church ceases, no rustling, no coughing; a pin-dropping silence witnesses to the fact that the attention of the entire congregation is upon listening to the music, and the effect of listening to it is one that elicits a kind of meditation: all distractions are set aside, the person is at repose, but thoroughly attentive. I have seen this effect only with melismatic chants, and I infer that this is an essential part of its liturgical purpose: this attentive repose elicited by the chants is a perfect preparation to hearing the lessons. When the lessons are sung, the continuity between the melismatic chants and the recitative lessons is established, and their complementarity is evident.

The alleluia is the quintessential melismatic chant. In fact, the word alleluia has as part of its music a jubilus, a long melisma sung on the last syllable of "Alleluia." In the case of the alleluia that has the verse "Justus ut palma," this melisma is fifty-one notes long. In the verse itself, there is one central melisma, on "cedrus":[23]



With this melisma, it becomes very clear that the point of the music is not simply to set forth the text, but, as patristic commentators on the alleluia called it, "jubilare sine verbis," to jubilate, or to sing a melisma, without words, to depart momentarily from the word in purely musical jubilation.[24] There is never any

[23] *Liber*, 1207.

[24] Cf. Walter Wiora, "Jubilare sine verbis," in *In memoriam Jacques Handschin*, ed. Higini Anglès et al. (Strassburg: P.H. Heitz, 1962), pp. 32–65.

question about the presence of the text; it is always there in its syllable, but I suspect that the composer has pushed the envelope to just before the breaking point—the melisma is long enough that the listener is almost ready to have forgotten what the word was. This extended melismatic writing serves two functions: first, it extends the purely musical aspect of the piece even farther than the gradual did; second, this, in turn, makes its purpose absolutely unambiguous: a more modestly melismatic chant might have been mistaken to have been just for the projection of its text, but here the melisma has been developed to the extent that one must acknowledge the alternate purpose—the alleluia is a meditation chant, whose melismatic style elicits an attentive repose that provides an effective, purposeful reflection on the lesson that has just been heard and a preparation for the hearing of the gospel which follows. Moreover, the progression from gradual to alleluia creates an increase of intensity that effectively underlines the sense of climax of which the singing of the gospel is the peak.

When it comes to the Ordinary of the Mass, a different principle obtains. Here the degree of elaboration characterizes the solemnity of the day. Melodies for the Ordinary allow some choice, there being eighteen sets of such melodies plus some optional alternatives *ad lib*. These sets of melodies are arranged in a generally hierarchical order, beginning with the most solemn. As a rule, the higher the degree of the feast, the more elaborate the chants for it. If the congregation sings the Ordinary, then, they are afforded a sophisticated manner of participation: they are asked to sing more elaborate chants on higher feast days, and this enhances their role by making them participants in the substantive expression of the solemnity of the day.

The range of syllabic density demonstrated above suggests a further reflection upon the sacred character of the chant. If the normal pace of the delivery of the text is that of the chanting of a psalm to a psalm tone, then the somewhat slower pace of the Mass propers represents a slowing down of the time of the psalm. When it comes to the gradual and alleluia, the pace of the psalm text is considerably slowed down; this is a pace one can experience readily, since it is placed in direct juxtaposition with the lessons, which are sung at a recitative pace, just like the psalms of the

office. In the case of the gradual and alleluia, this slowing down of the sacred text approaches at times a kind of stasis, and this stasis is as close as we may come to a sense of the suspension of the passage of time. In turn, this sense of the suspension of the passage of time is an intimation of the experience of eternity. In the contemplative state, things are viewed *sub specie æternitatis*, outside the passage of time; the liturgy provides this glimpse of eternity as a context for the hearing of the words of the sacred scripture.

Music thus contributes several things to the ordering of the liturgy: (1) it provides an elevated tone of voice that takes the texts out of the everyday and confirms them as sacred; (2) it differentiates each part of the liturgy from the other by musical styles that suit the very character of that part, allowing each to be perceived in its own liturgical functionality; (3) by distinguishing each part from the other, it clarifies the *bontà delle forme*, the excellence of the forms, contributing to the *splendor formæ* of the whole liturgy, its beauty; (4) this, in turn, when seen, pleases; it adds delight to prayer; and (5) it places the liturgy in the context of the transcendent and the eternal; this can only be through the use of music of the highest artistic quality and of uncompromised sacred character. It can only be through the use of music that is not mere utility music. Cardinal Ratzinger spoke of utility music:

> A Church which only makes use of "utility" music has fallen for what is, in fact, useless. . . . For her mission is a far higher one. As the Old Testament speaks of the Temple, the Church is to be the place of "glory," and as such, too, the place where mankind's cry of distress is brought to the ear of God. The Church must not settle down with what is merely comfortable and serviceable at the parish level, she must arouse the voice of the cosmos and, by glorifying the Creator, elicit the glory of the cosmos itself, making it also glorious, beautiful, habitable, and beloved.[25]

[25] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "On the Theological Basis of Church Music," in *The Feast of Faith*, pp. 113–126 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 124.

Thus, the intimate relation of musical styles to liturgical function, whether in lessons or prayers, proper chants or ordinary, is a most purposeful use of music in showing forth in a clear and radiant way the nature of the liturgical actions themselves; it is the most fundamental projection of the beauty of the liturgy. The other arts, architecture, painting, vestments, and the arts of movement each contribute to and support the beauty of the liturgy, but still the art of music is "greater even than that of any other art," because it "forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy,"[26] because it is so intimately bound to the sacred action, defining and differentiating the various parts in character, motion, and importance.

[26] Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶112, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 23.

7

GREGORIAN CHANT AS *FUNDAMENTUM* OF WESTERN MUSICAL CULTURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO SINGING THE SOLEMN HIGH MASS

In the last century Richard Wagner proposed a new theory of opera, and set about putting it into practice. He proposed that opera should be a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a synthesis of the arts. For his operas he drew upon medieval legends and poetic styles, and he made music the synthesizer of the arts, the principle of continuity which delineated the action and bore the main expression of the dramatic work.[1] This was hardly the innovation some have made it to be, for the middles ages already had its own *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The liturgy of the Christian Church was every bit as much a synthesis of the arts as was Wagner's opera, for it included the arts of poetry, music, painting, and architecture. Through the liturgical arts the senses aided the mind in turning itself to the worship of God. The colors of the vestments articulated the seasons—purple for the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, red for Pentecost and for feasts of martyrs, white for the festive seasons of Christmas and Easter and feasts of other saints,

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[1] Donald J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*, Second edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 405ff.

green for the intervening Sundays, and black for mourning. The precious metals and stones in the vessels befitted the service of the most high God. The architecture delineated the sacred precincts, and its windows bestowed upon that holy place the gift of light which was the image of God. The incense, whose rising of smoke was a symbol of the ascent of prayer, conveyed an odor of sweetness which was proper only to sacred places. The music articulated the services in time, providing extension and elaboration to the sacred texts, conveying them in an elevated style, and expressing through them a sacred affect. Even the sense of taste had a place, for though the bread and wine were turned into the Body and Blood of Christ, they retained the properties of their elements, and by their taste recalled the symbols of the natural nourishment of which they had become the higher spiritual kind. As in the opera, music was the art most intimately connected with the action—it provided the basic continuity to the services, while delineating its different parts according to their function. I propose to show some of the elementary ways in which Gregorian music delineates particular liturgical functions, but first a few words are necessary concerning the nature of the liturgy and its functions in general.

The Latin liturgy has sometimes been called a drama, and it is well-known that the roots of European drama are to be found in the liturgical dramas of the middle ages. Further, many aspects of the liturgy are "dramatic" in the sense of being striking, impressive, or moving. Yet there is an essential difference between drama and liturgy at its root. Drama is fictive, and its depictions before an audience carry that audience in an imaginary way to the time and place being depicted; the drama supplies details sufficient to this task. Liturgy is not fictive, but deals with things which a congregation takes to be real; in the Mass, the central event is the reenactment of the Last Supper, but not in a dramatic way, rather in a liturgical way—the congregation is not taken back to the year 30 AD or so, rather the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ is brought into the present time. In this "reenactment" there are no twelve apostles, there is very little narration of the actual event. The priest holds up the sacred elements and the people adore them, because it is the real presence of Christ. Were the

presence of God to be depicted in a drama, no one there, not even the most fervent Christian, would think to worship Him in that depiction, because there it is understood to be imaginary, but in the liturgy it is understood to be real.[2]

From this point of view, there are several levels of liturgical action. The first is the act as a whole: the action of the Mass is the act of Christ, carried out by the priest, in which He renews here and now His eternal sacrifice on the cross. The second is the discreet acts which support and surround this whole; the acts of giving praise (as in the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*), of petition—asking for mercy, profession of belief (*Credo*), of hearing a lesson, of taking communion. The third is the actions which are done in relation to these former, that of procession, that of incensation, that of standing, kneeling, that of participating in common vocally, that of attentively listening. All of these contribute to the whole and are delineated by Gregorian music.

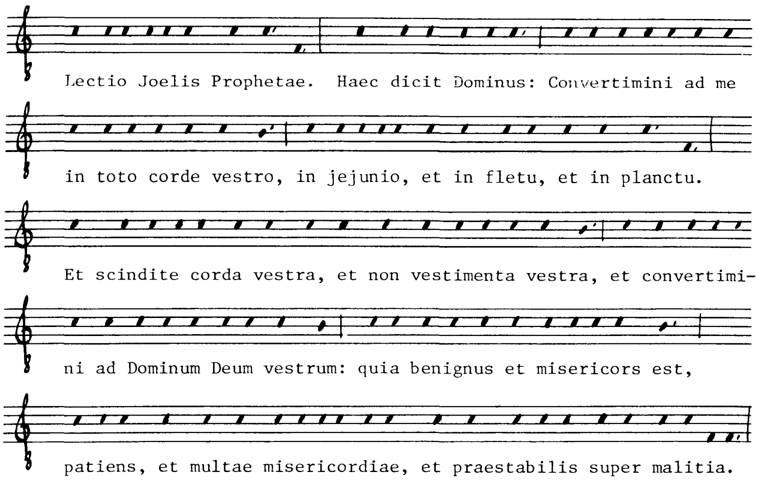
Gregorian music is functional music; although remarkable for its beauty and art, its styles are differentiated according to the purpose of the text which they set. For each kind of text, there is a particular style of singing which has its own rhetoric, differentiating and identifying that text and giving it suitable expression according to its function.

The priest or other cleric sings two kinds of texts—lessons and prayers. For each of these, simple formulae serve to deliver the text clearly and effectively, and at the same time to suggest something of its character. These simple melodies set the grammatical structure of the texts, providing for a comma at mid-sentence and a period at the end. The tone for the first lesson, usually from the prophets, has a certain harshness, and something of the character of a prophecy in the trumpet-like interval of a fifth; its astringent

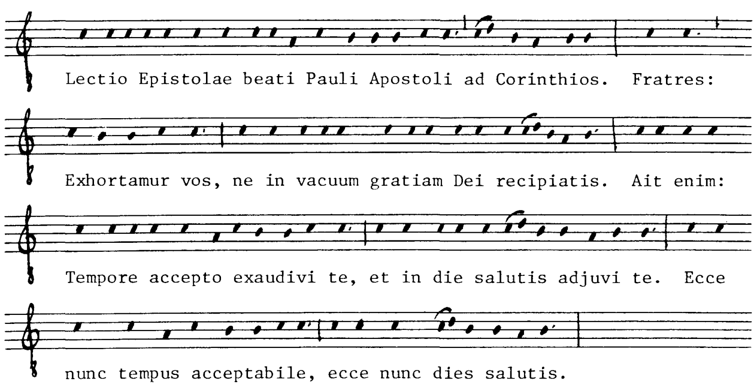
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[2] In the academic institutions of our own country much attention is paid to the Latin liturgy; it is studied by students of drama, literature, music, art history, political and social history, anthropology, and the like; in the seminaries and theological schools, it is studied by dogmatic theologians, canon lawyers, or even religious propagandists; but there is very little of the proper study of liturgy itself—what the Germans call *Liturgiewissenshaft*; those of us from the various other disciplines who do study it must constantly be aware that it is a whole, and seek to transcend the limits of our disciplines when we study it.

half-step comma gives it an ascetic, even harsh quality we might associate with a prophet. It is emphatic and direct.[3]



The tone for the second lesson, usually an epistle of St. Paul, is hortatory, giving a persuasive melodic cadence to underline the pattern of accents characteristic of the cadence of a periodic Latin sentence.[4]



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[3] *The Liber Usualis with Introduction and Rubrics in English*, edited by the Benedictines of Solesmes (Tournai: Desclée, 1956), pp. 102–103, 526.

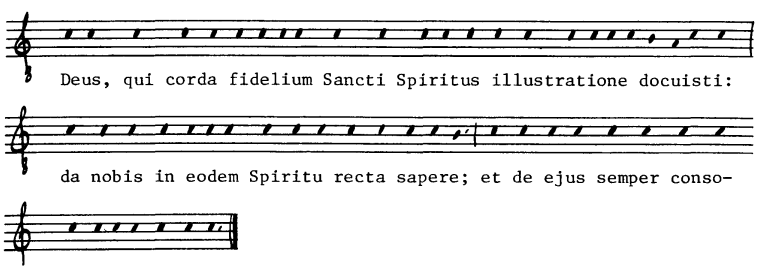
[4] Ibid., pp. 104–106, 532.

The final lesson, from the gospel, is sometimes sung to an extremely simple tone, sometimes to a more attractive melody. In either case, the melody distinguishes the gospel from the previous lessons.

The prayers also receive a characteristic setting; they all relate to the same recitation pitch, but are elaborated according to the function of their texts. The collects are short, single sentences, logically conceived and concisely and effectively stated. For example,

> O God who dost illuminate the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit; grant that through that same spirit we may rightly know, and ever rejoice in his consolation.[5]

They are set to a melody which leads the pitch of the first statement directly into its consequent.[6]



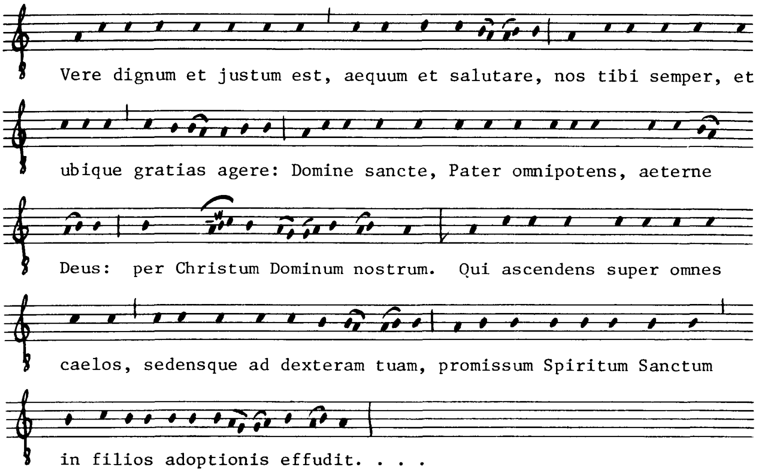
The more solemn prayer is the preface, the prayer immediately preceding the canon of the Mass when the consecration takes place. It is a longer prayer, more ornate in its rhetoric, and is concluded by singing the hymn *Sanctus*; the tone to which it is set is also more ornate, providing a greater emphasis on the line by changing pitch at its end, having two different reciting notes, and giving melodic turns upon the cadences.[7]

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[5] The collect for the votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, *The Liber Usualis*, p. 1279.

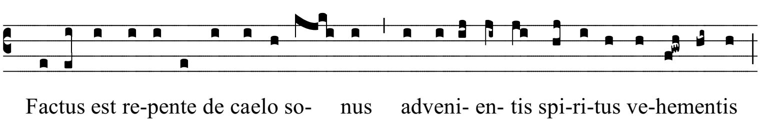
[6] *The Liber Usualis*, pp. 98–99.

[7] *Missale Romanum ex decreto sacrosancti concillii Tridentini restitutum*…, ed. 8° maius (New York : Benziger, 1944), "Praefatio solemnis de Spiritu Sancto," pp. 258–259.



The Lord's prayer which follows the canon is the most elaborate of the prayers, now setting the whole text to a melody without recourse to reciting many syllables on one tone; this melody is yet the elaboration over the basic pitch structure it has in common with the preface and the collect.

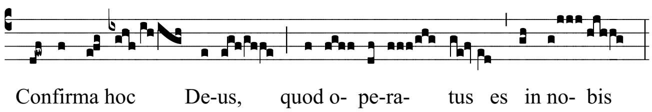
These melodies all set texts which are in themselves liturgical actions—the reading of the scriptures, and the delivery of prayer. Of the chants which the choir sings, on the other hand, several are not liturgical actions in themselves, but are meant to accompany other actions—processions, incensation, and so forth. They are the most syllabic and rhythmic as they accompany a procession—the communion procession is the most active (if the faithful all move to receive communion), and it is the simplest and most emphatic:[8]



The introit is a bit more elaborate, and the offertory is yet somewhat more so; for example, the offertory *Confirma hoc*:[9]

[8] *The Liber Usualis*, pp. 882–883.

[9] Ibid., p. 882.



The gradual is considerably more melismatic, and the alleluia is even more so:[10]



The gradual chants, those that come between the singing of the lessons, are of an extent that far exceeds any activity that they accompany. Rather, their function is as a complement to the lessons; while the lessons project relatively long texts to the most simple music, and the words prevail, the opposite is true of the gradual and alleluia—rather short texts are set to elaborate music. While the music of the lessons is set with respect to the accent of the text, often the gradual shows a different way of adding music to text; the most extensive melodies of these chants are the alleluias, in which a large portion of the melody falls upon the final unaccented syllable; here the function of the music exceeds the clear presentation of the text, and rather the music itself becomes a semi-wordless jubilation. This is the musical high point of the Mass; its effect, however, is not to detract from the lessons, but rather to enhance them. The hearing of too many words can be taxing to the ears, and the function of those melismatic chants is recollection and refreshment for the listener. The second lesson can be heard with considerable attentiveness after a melismatic chant.

The melismatic chants before the gospel were the subject of considerable elaboration in the middle ages, in the form of additional poetry set either to the music of the alleluia melisma, or at least to music related to that melisma. For example, the melody of the sequence *Veni sancte spiritus* is clearly related to the alleluia which precedes it (the alleluia above):[11]

[10] Ibid., p. 879.

[11] Ibid., p. 880.



The function of these chants can be seen in the overall form of the service. There are two parts of a Mass, the first part centers upon the readings; the most preeminent of them is the gospel, being the words of the Lord Himself. The second part centers upon the offering and consecrating of the bread and wine and the giving of it in communion. The ordering of the musical parts serves to highlight these central parts. For example, the placement of the most elaborate music immediately before the gospel creates a musical climax to the whole first part of the Mass. While the musical setting of the gospel is simple, it is emphasized as the center of attention by the attendant ceremonies; the priest moves to a more prominent place, incense is used, the people stand up—all of these create the climate of respect and honor given to the gospel.

Most of the features which I have described refer to a body of music whose practice has remained relatively constant and stable for over a millennium, throughout western Europe and its extension to other parts of the world. In fact Gregorian chant is a traditional art in the sense the famous Indian art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy defined:

> It has fixed ends, and ascertained means of operation, has been transmitted in pupillary succession from an immemorial past, and retains its values even when, as in the present day, it has gone quite out of fashion.[12]

It has fixed ends—its functional purpose in the liturgy; ascertained means of operation—the distinction of styles, as well as the eight ecclesiastical modes and the equal-note rhythmic theory (which gives it its generic name, plainsong); it has been transmitted in pupillary succession—we have learned its singing by working with those people who were already its practitioners; it comes from an immemorial past—its writing down was begun in the

12 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Nature of 'Folklore' and 'Popular Art'," in *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 35.

ninth century although its use is documented as early as the sixth or seventh centuries, and traces of it can be found in the melodies of Yemenite Jews who have been cut off from the outside world since the time of Christ, for example, the Yemenite eulogy of the Haftara[13]



can be compared with the Gregorian canticle for Holy Saturday;[14]



and it retains its values even when, as in our day, it has gone quite out of fashion—presently, some of the best work of musicologists in our country is being devoted to research in Gregorian chant, just at a time when the unofficial Roman Church seems to have thrown it aside.

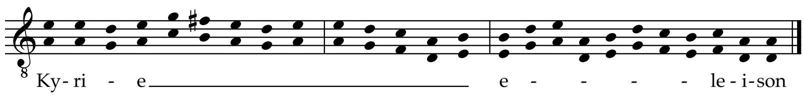
The culture of western Europe is what one might call a progressive culture; each generation is conscious of the tradition which it has received, but is aware that it is a changing tradition, and sees its role not as preserving the tradition intact, but making a contribution to that tradition, even of leaving one's own mark upon it. In this context, the Gregorian melodies formed a fundamental stratum over which was built, according to the artistic means of each age, super structures of quite different sorts. Polyphonic pieces in the style of each period were composed over the specific Gregorian melodies. For example, the earliest form of addition was in the form of parallel voices as in this example:[15]

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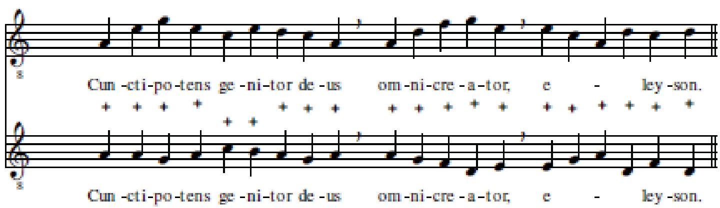
[13] Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 519.

[14] *The Liber Usualis*, p. 776R.

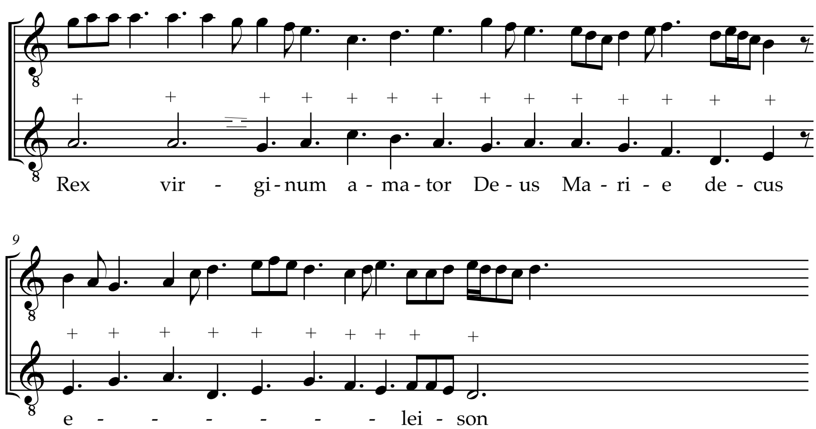
[15] After the *Scholia enchiriadis* (c. 850), cf. Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 21.



A contrasting melody in a like rhythm could be added:[16]



A gothic manner was to elaborate by introducing a variety of rhythms:[17]



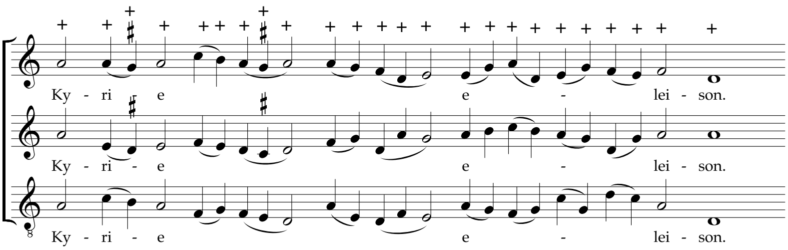
More parts could also be added:[18]

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[16] *Historical Anthology of Music*, I, p. 22.

[17] Max Lütolf, *Die mehrstimmigen Ordinarium Misssae-Sätze vom ausgehenden 11. bis zur Wende der 13. zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1970), Vol. II, p. 39.

[18] *Sieben Trienter Codices: Geistliche und weltliche Kompositionen des XV. Jahrhunderts*, Fünfte Auswahl, ed. Rudolf Ficker, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, Jg. XXXI, Bd. 61 (Wien: Universal-Edition, 1924), p. 62.



By the renaissance the Gregorian melodies might be shared by all the parts in turn, for example:[19]



[19] Cf. Heinrich Isaac, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Edward R. Lerner (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1974), Vol. II, p. 25.

Here the Renaissance ideal of harmony and proportionality of parts is realized in quite a different kind of piece from the medieval pieces, yet the underlying melody remains the same.

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, most of the prominent composers had a clerical schooling and profession—part of their daily occupation was to sing the offices in the great cathedrals and chapels, and what they sang was Gregorian chant. Small wonder that the modes in which they composed their pieces bore a close resemblance to those of the Gregorian pieces, and that the style which was the culmination of the late renaissance, that practiced by Palestrina, embodied the principles of melodic construction held in common with Gregorian chant. As the new styles of the seventeenth century came to be used in the churches, the style of Palestrina was yet kept as a normative church style; it was called the *prima prattica*, while the new styles were called the *seconda prattica*. The new styles included the extensive use of instruments, while the ecclesiastical style was basically a vocal style. As this was the traditional style of the pope's Sistine chapel, it came to be identified with that place, and eventually the name *a cappella* was seen to refer to the Sistine chapel. The unaccompanied vocal style was held to have a special place in the sacred services because of its more intimate relationship with the sacred texts.

The common conception of the history of Gregorian chant has been that it was overshadowed by polyphonic music sometime about the Renaissance, and fell into oblivion. This is far from the truth of the matter. Since the traditional repertory was a very extensive one, there was little need for the composition of new pieces, and it was in general not the subject of the ongoing composition of new pieces. Yet the singing of it continued to this day. The French dioceses were particularly active in the printing of excellent books of chant in the eighteenth century, and the published record of its cultivation is extensive. The spirit of the revival of the ancient art is manifested throughout its whole written history from the time of Charlemagne through the Second Vatican Council; in this spirit the monks of Solesmes contributed an immense amount of scholarship in providing the modern scholarly readings which are sung today.

But what of the present? Has Gregorian music been dropped by the Roman Church and must it now be relegated to museums and concert halls? While one must lament the cultural regression that is the result of the dropping of the chant in most churches, it remains alive and well in a few places; it has the solemn decrees of the Second Vatican Council in its favor, and the celebration of the Mass in Latin is, contrary to the newspapers, not forbidden. On the authority of the council, a revision of the Latin missal was published in 1969; in form it differs only little from the older rite. The English Mass now being said in the churches is based upon this Latin missal of 1969, and when we sing a Latin Mass, what we sing is not as some now think, the English Mass translated back into Latin. For the present it is the norm for the Roman Church, and it is for refusing to use the revised form, and not for using the Latin language that certain traditionalists have fallen under ecclesiastical censure.

Tonight, we celebrate a Mass sung in Gregorian chant, with some additions of medieval and renaissance polyphonic music. It is for us an act of worship which we invite you to share as you are disposed; if you find in the ceremonies something instructive of history, be moved to understanding; if you find in it order and beauty, be pleased and uplifted by it; if you find in its earthly beauty a sign of the hidden God, seek God through it; if you find in the celebration of an ancient liturgy the common roots of faith, worship with us.

8

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND LISTENING TO GREGORIAN CHANT

Active participation of the faithful in the liturgy has been a key theme since the Second Vatican Council, and a consequence of this has been the cultivation of congregational singing, sometimes to the exclusion of choirs, most often to the exclusion of Gregorian chant from our churches. But the council also said that Gregorian chant should have first place in the liturgy.[1] This has always been translated as "pride of place," but the term is *principem locum*, principal place, first place; "pride of place" sounds a bit like giving an old uncle a place at the table without letting him say anything; when we quote this term from the council we should really say "first place";[2] there is a very good reason for that.

The sung form of the liturgy has always been the paradigm, and the council reiterated that priority;[3] the foundational music of

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[1] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116 <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/ documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>

[2] Cf. William Mahrt, "Editorial: 'Pride of Place,'" pp. 395–8, below 3–4.

[3] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶113.

this sung form is Gregorian chant. How can these things be reconciled—the emphasis on active participation and on Gregorian chant? The answer depends upon what the council meant by active participation. This concept used by the council had a fairly long history in recent papal and church teaching, so it should be examined for the entire twentieth century. Since the teaching stretches over the eras of both the extraordinary and ordinary forms of the Mass, it should apply with equal vigor to both forms. In what follows, I show that the singing of Gregorian chant is thoroughly compatible with active participation, because that participation is hierarchical and because listening to and singing chant are inextricably linked. Pope St. Pius X was probably the first person in modern times to emphasize the concept of active participation; he probably originated the term. In his Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudine* he said,

> Our most profound desire is that the authentic spirit of Christ may once again be awakened in all its richness and that it may flourish throughout the whole body of the faithful. To this end it is imperative in the first place to give heed to the holiness and worthiness of the temple of God. For it is here that the faithful assemble to draw that spirit from its primary and indispensable source, that is from active participation in the sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.[4]

This document was written in Italian, a rare occurrence for a papal document, particularly a motu proprio, which is a legislative document. Certainly it addressed a wide range of potential readers, including those who may not read Latin, and this could explain its use of the vernacular. The Italian term was *partecipazione attiva*, which superficially translates as "active participation." But it is sometimes overlooked that when the official text of

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[4] St. Pius X, Motu Proprio, *Tra le sollecitudini*, introduction; cf. Coleman E. O'Neill, O.P., "The Theological Meaning of Actuosa Participatio in the Liturgy," in *Sacred Music and Liturgy Reform after Vatican II: Proceedings of the Fifth International Church Music Congress, Chicago-Milwaukee, August 21–28, 1966*, ed. Johannes Overath (Rome: Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae, 1969), pp. 89–110, here, p. 90; for the whole document, see <http://www.adoremus.org/TraLeSollecitudini.html>

this motu proprio was published in Latin, the term was translated as *actuosa participatio*,[5] that is to say, not just active, but real, fundamental participation. Thus Pius X really speaks about intrinsic participation in the liturgy itself, that it pertains to the holiness and worthiness of the temple of God, that it is participation in the sacred mysteries, and that it specifically mentions that the faithful draw the authentic spirit of Christ through this participation. That is a far cry from the appealing to "active participation" to justify having to sing everything or even being "animated" by the cantor.

Pope Pius XI in his *Divini cultus sanctitatem* addressed directly the singing of Gregorian chant:

> In order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian Chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies . . . they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the Liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed. If this is done, then it will no longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers—whether in the language of the Liturgy or in the vernacular—or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued manner.[6]

Gregorian chant is thus the means of active participation (again *actuosa participatio*), but this is a hierarchical participation, one in which each participant, whether, priest, choir, or congregation, plays a proper part. It is also a participation which, by singing Gregorian chant, fills the faithful with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy. Such participation in the beauty of the liturgy is a path to God, who is Beauty himself.

Pope Pius XII emphasized the Eucharistic sacrifice:

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[5] *Acta Sanctæ Sedis*, 36 (1903), 332ff.

[6] Pope Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution, *Divini Cultus Sanctitatem* <http://www.adoremus.org/DiviniCultus.html>

> It is therefore important for all the faithful to understand that it is their duty and highest privilege to take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice; and to take part in it, not passively or negligently or with distracted mind, but with application and actively (*actuose*) so as to be in the closest union with the High Priest, according to the words of St. Paul: "Yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus showed" (Phil. 2:5); and to offer it together with him and through him, and with him to surrender themselves.[7]

The pope speaks, even more directly than previous popes, of the faithful uniting themselves with the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ in the liturgy, fundamentally and actively. So often today active participation is no more than taking part in our own participation; but here the focus is upon the action of Christ.

Under Pius XII, the Congregation on Sacred Rites issued a comprehensive document on sacred music, which emphasized many aspects of *actuosa participatio*. The participation must be interior; from that flows its exterior manifestations. It must be sacramental, and it must be supported by education. These points are summarized by Coleman O'Neill:

> The Mass of its nature requires that all those present participate in it, in the fashion proper to each.
>
> (a) This participation must primarily be interior (i.e., union with Christ the Priest; offering with and through Him).
>
> (b) But the participation of those present becomes fuller (plenior) if to internal attention is joined external participation, expressed, that is to say, by external actions such as the position of the body (genuflecting, standing, sitting), ceremonial gestures, or, in particular, the responses, prayers and singing. . . .
>
> It is this harmonious form of participation that is referred to in pontifical documents when they speak of active participation (participatio actuosa), the principal

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[7] Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter Mediator Dei; cf. O'Neill, "Actuosa Participatio," 92; for the whole document, see <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediatordei_n.html>

> example of which is found in the celebrating priest and his ministers who, with due interior devotion and exact observance of the rubrics and ceremonies, minister at the altar.
>
> (c) Perfect *participatio actuosa* of the faithful, finally, is obtained when there is added sacramental participation (by Communion).
>
> (d) Deliberate *participatio actuosa* of the faithful is not possible without their adequate instruction.[8]

For the Second Vatican Council, it is *participatio plena, conscia, et actuosa*—full, conscious, and actual participation. As a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people, from which they derive the spirit of Christ.

> Mother church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation (*participatio plena, conscia, et actuosa*) in the ceremonies which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (I Peter 2:9; 2:4–5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.
>
> In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy this full and active (*plena et actuosa*) participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true spirit of Christ.[9]

"Full and active participation" in the English translation may have led some to assume that the council required the congregation to be "active" by singing all the music of the liturgy. But in the light of tradition the words of the council are unambiguous: fundamental participation in the liturgy means, participation in the profound act of Christ, who in the Mass offers an eternal sacrifice to the Father, and we as members of the Body of Christ are united in that sacrifice; we participate in that sacrifice. Whatever there is of external participation is a means to that end, and not

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[8] O'Neill, "*Actuosa Participatio*," 97, summarizing the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia*, ¶22–23 <http://www.adoremus.org/1958Intro-sac-mus.html>

[9] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶14.

an end in itself. Moreover, the "hermeneutic of continuity" so well explained by Pope Benedict XVI and embraced as well by his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, requires reading the council documents in the context of the tradition from before the council. The examples cited above make it clear that *participatio actuosa* should be understood in terms of the various participants in the liturgy. Thus active participation does not mean just singing everything yourself, not just participation in "songs"[10] but in the depth of the hierarchical liturgy, shared by each part of the worshipping community.

Musicam Sacram, the instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on music for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, thus a document of high authority, emphasizes the hierarchical nature of participation:

> The priest, the sacred ministers and the servers, the reader and those in the choir, and also the commentator, should perform the parts assigned to them in a way which is comprehensible to the people, in order that the responses of the people, when the rite requires it, may be made easy and spontaneous.[11]

Each participant in the liturgy has a distinct but coordinated role assigned by the liturgy. I would add that participation in the liturgy so realized is much more significant when the congregation fulfills just one of several functions in a fundamental interaction, a deeper and more varied manner of participation than the notion of the congregation singing all the parts.

How does this fairly abstract notion of participation in the sacrifice of Christ make any difference to whether we sing Gregorian chant or not? The answer depends upon two different levels of liturgical action. One is the fundamental liturgical

[10] It is unfortunate that *cantus* in the documents is usually translated "songs," when it might well have been translated "chants." "Songs" would better translate *carmina* or *cantilenæ*; "songs" in a liturgical context too often refers to pieces written in the style of popular music and usually not on scriptural or liturgical texts.

[11] *Musicam Sacram*, ¶26.

action, the action of Christ's sacrifice, in which we participate as members of his Mystical Body. The other is the variety of liturgical actions, in the plural; these are the diverse parts of the ritual that contribute to that fundamental liturgical action: principally, the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the sacrament, but in more detail, various actions—processions, lessons, prayers, hymns, etc.—particularly as they are expressed in music.

The Gregorian chants of the Mass are a fundamental part of these liturgical actions.[12] Once in a while a well-meaning commentator on the liturgy will say "Gregorian chant is the ideal setting of its text." But Gregorian chants, plural, are the ideal setting of each particular liturgical function. An introit is not a gradual is not a psalm, etc. For example, an office antiphon to a psalm is a rather simple melody that functions as a refrain before and after a whole psalm chanted by an entire community in the divine office. An introit has a much different shape and purpose: the introit *Ecce advenit* for Epiphany



is suited to its function, that is, it accompanies the procession that begins the Mass; it conveys a sense of sacredness, but it is also elaborate enough to convey a sense of a certain solemnity which is suitable to initiating the singing of an entire Mass, more elaborate than an office antiphon would be. At the pope's Masses in Washington and New York, if one thing could have been changed, the metric hymns accompanied by brasses and timpani that went on forever during the entrance procession could have been replaced by a real Gregorian introit. The hymns emphasized the

[12] Cf. the forthcoming article, William Mahrt, "The Propers of the Mass As Integral to the Liturgy," in *Benedict XVI and Sacred Music: Proceedings of the Third Fota International Liturgy Conference, 2010* (Dublin; Four Courts Press, 2012).

here and now, suggesting "Here comes a procession; they are all singing and the trumpets are blaring; it is going to be a great occasion!" But if they had sung a Gregorian introit, it would have suggested "Oh, this is a sacred occasion; this introit says to us something important is about to happen." It does not say "Here we are, hooray, hooray!" It says, "Everyone turn your attention to the sacred mysteries which are about to be celebrated." That is how Gregorian pieces serve their liturgical functions.

One more thing about the introit: who should sing the it? Very often it is said that the congregation should sing the introit. The cantor might say "Let us now greet our celebrant by singing hymn number 54." Aside from the fact that the hymn scarcely ever addresses the celebrant, it is not the function of the introit to greet the celebrant;[13] the function of the introit chant is to accompany the procession, and the function of the procession is not to encounter the congregation but to move to the place where the sacrifice of the Mass is to be offered. The congregation's proper participation, then, is to witness the procession, to see the ascending order of the church in procession—led by the cross, acolytes, lectors, deacon, finally the priest at the end or even the bishop, in an orderly fashion—to see them move purposefully to the altar and incense the altar as a sacred place, setting the stage, so to speak, where the sacrifice is to be offered. The congregation is virtually included in the procession when the procession moves from the sacristy down a side aisle to the back of the church and then up the center aisle to the altar. This traverses the entire length of the church and to some extent encircles it, thus delineating a sacred space and symbolically encompassing the congregation, bringing it with it.

So it is not the function of the congregation to provide the accompanying music for the procession. It is their function to witness and to be moved by the beauty of the procession, by the

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[13] The ordinary form provides a greeting, but it is the celebrant who initiates it, just before the penitential rite, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . " or "The Lord be with you," to which the congregation responds "And with your spirit."

beauty of the vestments and of the music the choir sings, and by the purposeful motion to the place where something important is going to happen. For the congregation, it is the Kyrie and the Gloria that they should sing; these are the right pieces for them, because these chants are in and of themselves the liturgical action at that moment. They are not accompanying anything else; they are intrinsic acts of worship—litanies, hymns of praise, and a solemn profession of belief, thus appropriately sung by all present together. They are also suited to congregational singing, since their music can be repeated over several Sundays, allowing the congregation to learn them well. Moreover, if the introit is beautifully sung by the choir, the congregation will be encouraged to sing the Kyrie and the Gloria more beautifully.

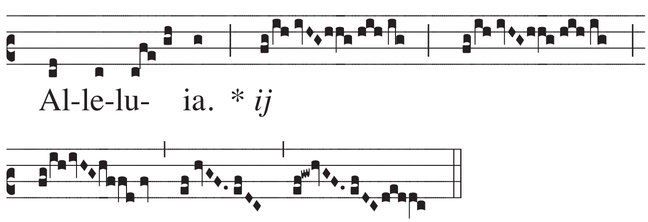
A different issue is the meditation chants, the gradual or responsorial psalm and the alleluia. I sometimes ask what is the purpose of the responsorial psalm in the modern liturgy? I am often told, "to give the people something to do," not quite a sufficient discussion of that part of the Mass. I have to acknowledge that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal gives a more purposeful description of it: "It fosters meditation on the Word of God."[14] And yet, if you test the product that we are given by the commercial sources for the responsorial psalm, it rather better fits the description of just giving the people something to do, because the melodies are banal and uninteresting, and not beautiful—not conducive to meditation. One is reminded of a statement of Pope Benedict, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger (thus not a papal opinion, but still a good one and very succinct), that utility music is useless.[15] These responsorial psalms are utility music; their only purpose is to set the text; whatever melody it takes, it sets it and they sing it. However, the gradual and alleluia, which by tradition were assigned to follow the lessons and are still a legitimate option, are very different. They are melismatic chants, particularly the alleluia.

[14] GIRM, ¶61.

[15] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*, tr. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 124; see the full quotation below.



People sometimes say, "Oh yes, we sing Gregorian chant for the alleluia," but they are astonished when I tell them "that is not really Gregorian chant." "Of course it is, it is an antiphon from Holy Saturday." "That is precisely my point, it is only properly Gregorian chant when sung where the liturgy prescribes it, as a psalm antiphon for Holy Saturday." If you sing it as an alleluia, it is out of place; this is because the gradual and alleluia present melismatic music that has a particular purpose in the context of the lessons. Compare that little alleluia with this one:[17]



It is considerably longer than the other alleluia, in fact unambiguously too long if it were only a setting of its text. The purpose of this alleluia is embodied in the melisma itself, the jubilus, a melody that has its own internal organization and repetitions and a sense of progress and form, all of which express a kind of wordless jubilation. It is a piece of beautiful music that is based upon the word "alleluia," but departs from it, transcends it.

I learned something about the purpose of these chants by watching our congregation. When the chants are sung beautifully, there is a still in the church, as is otherwise not heard except

[16] *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1961), p. 776KK.

[17] *Liber*, 1076.

at the consecration. But just before the gospel, all are quiet. If five people in the congregation were distracted, moving around, turning pages and various things, just the motion of these few people would make a kind of white noise. Suddenly it all stops (white noise is not noticed until it stops). When it stops, there is an absolute still; no one is distracted; they are all focused on something. They are focused on hearing the beauty of the chant, the purpose of which is recollection. This focus causes them to look inward and to order their souls, one might say, and to be attentive. That is the purpose of these chants, to allow the people to reflect on what they have heard and to prepare them to hear the next lesson; in the case of the alleluia, the jubilus creates a sense of ecstatic expectation of hearing the gospel. If the priest then sings the gospel, this comes as the culmination of everything since the beginning of the introit. The alleluia is saying, "Here comes something really important, something to rejoice over." In addition, the importance of the gospel is emphasized by a procession to the ambo with candles and incense (and ministers accompanying, if it is a solemn Mass). The gradual and alleluia, then, have the function of creating recollection, making what I call attentive repose.[18] The other proper chants of the Mass do not quite do

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[18] There are some contradictions between the general principle that, on the one hand, Gregorian chant has first place, and on the other hand, the rubric in the GIRM prescribes that the alleluia "is sung by all while standing." (¶62) This rubric is evidently aimed at a rather simple, non-Gregorian antiphon (like the little three-fold alleluia from Holy Saturday) and a short verse, which is the usual practice in the parishes. The congregation is not capable of singing the entire Gregorian alleluia, yet these melodies are the summit of that art and reflect their own exquisite liturgical function; to rule them out absolutely would be a contradiction of *Sacrosanctum concilium*, which is a more authoritative document than the GIRM. Moreover, the Gregorian alleluias appear in the *Gregorian Missal* (1990 and still in print), which is a book prepared for parish choirs. The liturgical function of the Gregorian alleluia is more complex than the GIRM prescribes (the congregation welcomes the Lord in the gospel and expresses their faith); it is at once a meditation chant which reflects upon the reading just heard and an anticipation of the singing of the gospel. Likewise the duration of the alleluia is considerably longer than a simple gospel procession takes (except at Westminster Cathedral, where at the Pope's Mass the entire

that, because they serve other purposes: the introit, offertory, and communion accompany processions. They project a sense of solemn motion. The gradual and alleluia project a sense of stillness and repose, even though they are very active chants.[19]

These effects are achieved through listening, not singing. Pope John Paul II has spoken about the role of listening. In an *ad limina* address to the bishops of the Pacific Northwest, he specifically mentions active participation as including listening:

> Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. Yet active participation does not preclude the active

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Gregorian alleluia was sung, and it lasted exactly the same time as the procession, which went about a third of the distance of the nave to the great pulpit); if the people stand at the beginning of the singing of a Gregorian alleluia, they are left standing for quite a while, apparently to no purpose. If the alleluia is a meditation chant reflecting upon the previous lesson, then it is more appropriate for them to remain seated. In my own practice, the gospel procession begins toward the end of the alleluia verse, and the people stand approximately at the repeat of the alleluia. This fulfills the status of the Gregorian alleluia as one of the highest of the Gregorian forms, but is in technical violation of the GIRM, since the congregation does not sing any of it. I have proposed a solution for those who wish to observe the GIRM strictly, that the congregation sing the repeat of the intonation of the Gregorian alleluia, after which the choir sings the jubilus. Congregations are able to repeat most Gregorian alleluia intonations without difficulty, and in doing so, they sing almost as much music as the little antiphon seen above, and they listen to quite a bit more.

[19] Organ music can also aid in recollection. I have often thought about the function of an organ prelude at a Mass. There is a practical function: to see if you can keep people from talking before Mass. But how you keep people from talking before Mass is to play something that elicits a sense of recollection, and that is the more fundamental purpose. A contrapuntal piece principally does that better than anything else. The opposite is what is played at the end of Mass. It depends upon what the people are expected to do with it. If they are to stay and pray, then a brief recessional for the procession out of the church can be played, followed by something reflective and introspective. On the other hand, there are pieces often heard, like the *Westminster Carillon*, for instance, which seems to be calculated to drive the entire congregation out of the church immediately, and such an effect can be observed with such pieces; cf. William Mahrt, "Thinking about the Organ," pp. 441–3, below.

> passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.[20]

Thus listening is an essential component of active participation; listening to a gradual or alleluia is "profoundly active."

How can music create recollection? Would it not suffice just to say the text? Plato gives a reason in the *Timaeus*, his Genesis—a philosopher's speculation on how God might have created the universe, accounting for the creation of man and of his senses. In discussing the senses, he says of sight,

> God invented and gave us sight to the end that we might behold the courses of intelligence in the heaven, and apply them to the courses of our own intelligence which are akin to them, the unperturbed to the perturbed, and that we, learning them and partaking of the natural truth of reason, might imitate the absolutely unerring courses of God and regulate our own vagaries.

And of hearing,

> The same may be affirmed of speech and hearing. They have been given by the gods to the same end and for a like reason. For this is the principal end of speech, whereto it most contributes. Moreover, so much of music as is adapted to the sound of the voice and to the sense of hearing is granted to us for the sake of harmony. And harmony, which has motions akin to the revolutions of our souls, is not regarded by the intelligent votary of the Muses as given by them with a view to irrational pleasure, which is deemed to be the purpose of it in our day, but as meant to correct any discord which may

[20] Pope John Paul II, *Ad Limina* Address to the Bishops of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska, October 9, 1998 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father john_paul_ii/speeches/1998/october/>

> have arisen in the courses of the soul, and to be our ally in bringing her into harmony and agreement with herself, and rhythm too was given by them for the same reason, on account of the irregular and graceless ways which prevail among mankind generally, and to help us against them.[21]

In the view of *Timaeus*, the heavens are a display of the order of creation, and upon seeing that order we model the order of our own souls. And then there is the sense of hearing; it is given for the sake of speech, which conveys the products of reason, as does sight, but it is also for the sake of music. There are several kinds of music; one is the kind that we can hear; another is the internal music of the soul, "being in harmony and agreement with herself"; the third is the harmonious order of the cosmos itself. The music we can hear is to model that internal music of the soul, correcting any disorder in it and bringing it into harmony with the music of the cosmos.

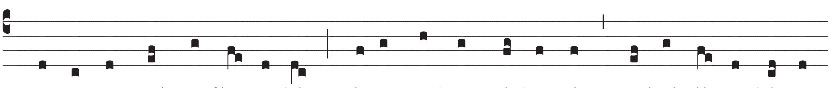
Even today we need to heed Plato's words: the sound of music aids putting our souls into order, an order that is modeled upon heavenly order. We now know something that the ancients did not know, that is, that the universe is quite a bit larger than they thought, and some would say, more disorderly. I would beg to differ. While there may be some elements of random activity in this enormous universe, the more that is discovered about it the more it seems that behind it all is a magnificent sense of order. That is not only for the universe on the large. There is also an extraordinary order on the small. The atom is broken apart only to reveal smaller parts that are working in a kind of order. And these are broken apart only to discover smaller parts also working in their own kind of order. So there is in the universe an extensive and magnificent ordering of parts. We have been given free will, which allows us to choose to model our own souls upon the order given by the creator or not, and we sometimes chose not, and then we need a remedy, and Plato suggests that music may be one of those remedies: by exemplifying order, music proposes to our

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[21] Plato, *Timaeus*, 47, b-e, tr. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series, 71 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 1175.

souls an ordering model. Plato was an idealist, but I do not believe he said these things just because he had a good idea; he did so because he had the experience of hearing music, because when one hears music one experiences the fact that it affects our souls directly, and that in some sense it calls for us to assent to the order of the music and to participate in it. It allows us to experience something perfectly ordered as a model.

Interestingly, Plato says the sense of hearing is for the sake of both speech and music. Gregorian chant, in fact, represents both of those, because it is a synthesis of text and melody in a more fundamental way than most other music. Consider the psalm antiphon:[22]



This sentence has two basic clauses: *Justus ut palma florebit* (the just shall flourish like a palm tree) and *sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur* (like a cedar of Lebanon he shall be multiplied). The first clause is given an entire melodic contour; the second has a more complicated contour, that allows the last word to be slightly separated. Medieval theorists of chant speak about the relation of music and grammar: the melody represents the grammar of the text.[23] The melody also reflects the accent of the text, another element of its grammar; as a rule accented syllables either receive more notes, or a higher pitch (at least, are followed by a lower pitch). But, in addition to that, the melody adds harmony. By harmony, I mean that

[22] *Antiphonaire monastique, XIIe siècle, Codex 601 de la Bibliothèque caplitulaire de Lucques*, Paléographie musicale, IX (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1906; reprint, Berne: Herbert Lang & Cie., 1974), p. 524 [481].

[23] Calvin M. Bower, "The Grammatical Model of Musical Understanding in the Middle Ages," in *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, ed. Patrick J. Gallacher & Helen Damico (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 133–145.

the melody comprises notes that are harmonious with each other. In spite of the fact that it starts on D, it makes a C-E-G-E-C chord-like structure on *Justus ut palma*. Then on *sicut cedrus Libani*, an F-A-F; then to get back to the D, it centers on an E-G-E third, leading back to D. There is thus a sense of a C-triad, an F-triad, then a return to D. That is the harmony of the melody. All Gregorian chants have similar kinds of harmonious constructions and thus a synthesis of language and harmony. As models upon which to order the soul, these Gregorian melodies incorporate language and harmony in pieces intimately linked to their liturgical actions, and thus listening to them can draw the soul into the liturgy, into the liturgical actions, and into the fundamental liturgical action itself, the work of Christ.

How does music work in the liturgy? Cardinal Ratzinger gave us some wise words about the purpose of music, in that passage, in which he criticizes "'utility' music"; he says,

> A Church which only makes use of "utility" music has fallen for what is, in fact, useless. She too becomes ineffectual. For her mission is a far higher one. As the Old Testament speaks of the Temple, the Church is to be the place of "glory," and as such, too, the place where mankind's cry of distress is brought to the ear of God. The Church must not settle down with what is merely comfortable and serviceable at the parish level; she must arouse the voice of the cosmos and, by glorifying the Creator, elicit the glory of the cosmos itself, making it also glorious, beautiful, habitable and beloved. . . . The Church is to transform, improve, "humanize" the world—but how can she do that if at the same time she turns her back on beauty, which is so closely allied to love? For together, beauty and love form the true consolation in this world, bringing it as near as possible to the world of the resurrection.[24]

[24] Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith,* 124–5; this is in specific reference to music, since the chapter is entitled "On the Theological Basis of Church Music" (pp. 97–126).

The beauty of music is perceived first of all in listening, and singing is based upon the foundation of that listening.[25] Music begins in silence; this is a really important point. If we have sounds—noises—around us all the time, including the television and the radio, we have no experience of silence. But silence is that place where recollection is possible. How can we have a sense of recollection when sounds are impinging upon us? Recollection is a necessary predisposition for an awareness of the presence of God. It is difficult to receive, create, recall, or respond to a sense of the presence of God if words continue to impose themselves through loud music. Silence, then, is absolutely important. But there are dead silences and live silences. Sometimes we are told that there must be silence in the liturgy, and so the priest sits down and nothing happens, and everybody waits for him to stand back up again; that is a dead silence. On the other hand, in a concert of a great piece of sacred music, at the end of the piece there is a hushed silence; no-one dare applaud for several seconds; this is the first instant in which the entire piece has been heard and its full beauty recognized. At that point everyone can say, "Oh, that is what the whole piece looks like, its beauty is awesome." That silence is a very important instant, a communal activity. It is a live silence that is full of meaning, so much so that one might be tempted to despise the person who starts the applause and breaks the silence. Similar silences occur in the liturgy, for example, at the consecration, after communion, and after the gradual and alleluia.

How can music "elicit the glory of the cosmos," as Cardinal Ratzinger puts it? First of all, music gives harmony, not just the harmony of chords, but the harmonious motion of melody, rhythm, and counterpoint, and when we hear this, they resonate within us, because they have an affinity with the way we represent order and purpose, and they suggest order and purpose to us. That feeling of affinity, then, helps us to model our own sense of

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[25] These ideas were developed briefly in William Mahrt, "Editorial: Listening and Singing," pp. 383–6, below.

order and purpose. This is how and why we internalize music. We make the music we hear our own; listening and hearing are very active processes. We respond in an active way to the beauty which is intrinsic to the music. That beauty is an aspect of all reality, of God and all his creation. That beauty embodies the integrity and persuasiveness of things whose inner essence freely shines forth.

Listening is aided by memory. We hear a piece and we remember it. When we hear it again, our memory is renewed and deepened; upon repetition, these pieces become our own. I sang chant for many years, before I recalled that in the Middle Ages, chants were always sung from memory, and I determined to experiment with it. I memorized some chants and sang them and realized that the experience of singing from memory is very different from singing from notation; we sing from something that belongs to us. We sing by heart; to sing by heart, technically, means to sing from memory, but why then do we not say "singing by brain?" Because to say "singing by heart" means singing from our very interior selves.

Singing flows from listening, just as speech does. A young child, hears words first, and then begins to reproduce them. The beauty of music which we perceive and internalize and make our own—just like the child who speaks with the words he heard—becomes the resource from which we sing. To the extent to which our hearing makes us aware of the Creator and all his works by hearing music, to that extent we can praise him with our return of singing.

So by singing, we exercise upon our own thoughts a kind of ordering and give them a beautiful external form, and if this form is compelling enough, if it is truly beautiful, it creates the external unity that Pope Pius XII talked about, that external unity of the voices singing. The beauty of the external form is also sufficiently persuasive to create an internal unity of minds, a concord of hearts. It is something that can simply be observed: when a congregation sings a part of the Mass, they do so quite together, but when they must respond speaking, they do not respond as well together. When prayers are spoken, there is not the same kind of ordering principle as there is with music. One sometimes

hears in the Mass, at "Orate fratres," when it comes time to make the response "Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium," there is always someone who rushes ahead and sounds like he is trying to get there before everyone else, and then there are a few who are dragging behind. So the recitation of the text without chant is not as orderly, not as beautiful; it does not elevate the mind or unite the hearts as well.

In the liturgy, when we hear pieces of Gregorian chant and internalize them, they unite us intimately with the liturgical action, since the chants themselves are intrinsic to the action. An introit is an integral part of the rite, and it consists of a synthesis of text and music. It is not just a text to which someone happens to have set music; rather, what is in the missal as an introit is the text of a chant; the chant itself, both music and text, is the fundamental constituent of the liturgy. Hearing such a chant provides the basis for the subsequent singing of other parts; this is our proper participation, our *actuosa participatio*, and not just "active" participation.

Just a brief word about the chant and the sacred. Gregorian chant is unique, there is nothing like it; it does not belong anywhere else but in church. Even if some people use it for mood music, its proper place is in church. I once heard Gregorian chant played in an up-scale clothing store and thought, "Why this is in the wrong place?" It is like incense: as soon as you catch a whiff of it, you know where you are. There is thus something that is unambiguous about the sacredness of Gregorian chant. I think ambiguity is not a necessary part of the beauty of sacred music. In fact, clarity is a necessary part of sacred music. Clarity means that its purpose is unambiguous. So Gregorian chant has an exclusive use as sacred music and an unambiguous purpose.

But in addition to that, it has a different relationship to time. For a metric hymn, the passage of time is regular, fixed, and emphatic. For a Gregorian chant, the passage of time is in fact irregular; it evokes a sense of the suspension of its passage; it evokes a sense of the eternal. A good friend of mine, who is an ethnomusicologist, and has spent decades studying the music of India and the sacred musics of the world, says there is something common to all sacred music, that it is always seeking; it is always

going forward; it is not stopping here and now. I think this also means that it is a kind of music that is not its own object of attention, but in fact focuses attention upon another object, which is divine worship and the ultimate object of that worship. As we listen and respond to it in singing, we then have our real *actuosa participatio*.

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COMMENTARY ON *SING TO THE LORD*

Sing to the Lord,[1] a thoroughgoing replacement of *Music in Catholic Worship*, was approved by the bishops' conference at their meeting last November. It had been the subject of consultation in October 2006,[2] and had been redrafted extensively. At the actual meeting, according to a report of Helen Hitchcock in *Adoremus Bulletin*,[3] the bishops reviewed over four hundred amendments, but they voted on the document without seeing the amended text. Originally it was proposed as binding liturgical law for the United States, which would have required Vatican confirmation, but it was decided not to present it as binding law but only as recommendation, thus avoiding the necessity of submitting it to the Vatican. The previous year, the bishops approved a directory for hymn texts and sent it for Vatican confirmation, which confirmation is yet to be received. It seems unlikely

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[1] Available at http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/ (Paragraph citations in the text are from this document, occasionally specified as SttL.)

[2] See William Mahrt, "Toward a Revision of *Music in Catholic Worship*," *Sacred Music*, 134, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 54–60.

[3] Helen Hull Hitchcock, "Bishops Approve Three Liturgy Items at Busy Baltimore Meeting," *Adoremus Bulletin*, 13, no. 9 (December 2007–January 2008), 4.

that the Vatican would have confirmed the present document, and thus they settled for a lesser status. The result is a document with extensive recommendations about the employment of music in the liturgy. It incorporates the views of many without reconciling them: Everyone will find something in the document to like, but the astute will notice that these very things are in conflict with other statements in the same document. Essentially, it states the status quo, with the addition of principles from Vatican documents; what comes from Vatican documents, however, does represent binding liturgical law.

There are distinct improvements over the previous document, most notably, that it takes seriously the existing liturgical legislation. There are copious citations from major sources of liturgical law.[4] Yet these citations often seem to be imposed upon a document already written without them, and some authoritative statements, after being cited, are ignored in subsequent discussion.

One of the most positive and fundamental statements in the document is that the priest celebrant[5] should sing the most important parts that pertain to him. "The importance of the priest's participation in the liturgy, especially by singing, cannot be overemphasized" (¶19). Seminaries should give sufficient training in singing, so that future priests can confidently sing their parts in the Mass (¶20). In my opinion, this is the lynchpin of a successful sung liturgy. When the priest sings his parts, the parts of congregation and choir fall naturally into place as integral parts of an organic whole. When the priest speaks these parts, the parts the congregation and choir sing seem to be less integral to the liturgy.

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[4] A quick tally produces the following results: sixty-nine citations from *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (hereafter cited as GIRM), twenty-four from Lectionary for Mass, twenty from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 1963, SC), and thirteen from *Musicam Sacram* (*Instruction on Music in the Liturgy*, 1967, MS).

[5] The term in the document is celebrant and not presider. Presider has always seemed to me to imply that the priest is just one of the congregation chosen to represent the people, as the president of a secular assembly is usually elected by the assembly, a view not entirely consistent with priestly ordination, the call from Christ, and the role as *alter Christus*.

That the parts are all sung gives them a continuity that binds them together into a coherent liturgy.

This notion goes back directly to *Musicam Sacram*, where three degrees of the employment of music are delineated: (1) the dialogues with the congregation (at the beginning, before the preface, before communion, and at the conclusion), the Sanctus and the Lord's Prayer, and the collects—principally the priest's parts plus the most central congregational parts; (2) the rest of the Ordinary of the Mass and the intercessions—principally the rest of the congregation's parts; (3) the sung Propers of the Mass (introit, gradual, Alleluia, offertory, communion)—principally the choir's parts, and possibly the lessons. *Musicam Sacram* proposes that these be instituted in order, that is, the first degree should be in place before the second and third degrees (MS ¶28–31).

Musicam Sacram places these degrees in the context of a general statement about the sung Mass: "The distinction between solemn, sung, and read Mass . . . is retained. . . . However, for the sung Mass different degrees of participation are put forward here for reasons of pastoral usefulness, so that it may become easier to make the celebration of Mass more beautiful by singing, according to the capabilities of each congregation" (MS ¶28). This compromise of the notion of a completely sung Mass, a high Mass, was allowed to permit congregations gradually to add sung parts according to their abilities, the ideal being gradually to achieve the high Mass. Since then, however, a new principle has been extrapolated, that of "progressive solemnity." *Sing to the Lord* proposes that the amount of singing be used to distinguish the most solemn feasts from the lesser days. The document cites Musicam Sacram, ¶7, but not the more pertinent ¶28, where the context is to achieve a completely sung Mass, not to differentiate the days.

It is quite true that traditionally, there was a principle of progressive solemnity, by which the chants of the Ordinary of the Mass were more or less elaborate according to the solemnity of the day; likewise the use of instruments was restricted during the seasons of Advent and Lent as a sign of the penitential character of these seasons. On the other hand, the chants for the penitential seasons are sometimes more elaborate and more beautiful. But

there is nothing in the tradition that omits the singing of a text as a sign of lesser solemnity, except for, perhaps, the very depth of Holy Week. It is true that the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* concedes that parts of the Mass usually sung need not always be sung (¶40), but this is in the context of weekday Masses and for the accommodation of the abilities of the congregation. *Musicam Sacram* articulates the principle in ¶10, but this conflicts with its ¶28.

As a practical matter, progressive solemnity may be useful; the gradual introduction of sung parts is a much more realistic strategy than the sudden imposition of a completely sung service upon an unsuspecting congregation. Yet, there is good reason to be consistent about which pieces are sung from day to day, and the differentiation of the solemnity of days should be achieved principally through the kind of music employed, rather than how much. As a matter of principle, I would suggest that "progressive solemnity" does not properly serve the sung liturgy, since it omits the singing of certain parts of the Mass which should and could be sung and thus gives up on the achievement of a completely sung service. The result is what I have called the "middle Mass," neither high nor low, in which the beautiful and purposeful differences between the musical parts of the Mass are overshadowed by the more obvious differences between the spoken and sung parts.

It is encouraging that the document mentions the singing of the lessons;[6] until now, this has been swept under the carpet. Traditionally in the high Mass, the lessons were always sung; the present document seems to recommend them on more solemn days, but there is no reason not to sing them as a matter of course. The continuity from prayer to lesson to chant at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word contributes to an increasing climax the peak of which is the gospel. When the lessons together with the authentic Gregorian gradual and Alleluia are sung and a gospel procession is made, a splendid progression of increasing importance is depicted in the liturgy.

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[6] ¶153; there was no mention of it in *Music in Catholic Worship*, though *Musicam Sacram* provided for it with reservations (¶31e).

Another positive statement and a distinct improvement in the present document is the acknowledgement of the role of Gregorian chant, quoting the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which gives chant "pride of place in liturgical services," (SttL ¶72)[7] and citing the council's mandate that the faithful be able to sing the Ordinary of the Mass together in Latin (¶74), and even asserting a minimum: "Each worshiping community in the United States, including all age groups and all ethnic groups, should, at a minimum learn Kyrie XVI, Sanctus XVIII, and Agnus Dei XVIII." A second stage of learning then includes Gloria VIII, the Credo, and the Pater Noster (¶75). Though the document does not mention it, the latter two are particularly desirable for international gatherings, especially for papal audiences, where everyone can participate in a common expression of worship. There is a touching story from the time immediately following the Second World War: Two trains arrived at the same platform, one from France and one from Germany, and the tension between the two groups disembarking was palpable. Then someone intoned "Credo in unum Deum," and the entire crowd spontaneously continued singing the whole Creed, expressing a common faith which transcended the recent history of animosity. Would enough people today even know the Credo, were the same event even to occur now?

The normative status of chant is, however, qualified by citing the council's "other things being equal." This is elaborated (¶73) by saying that every bishop, pastor, and liturgical musician should be sensitive to the reception of chants when newly introduced to a congregation. Who could dispute that, in principle? Yet why is such a qualification made only for chant, when it should apply equally well to any music newly introduced? How many of us have heard "other things are never equal," when we ask to sing the church's normative music?

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[7] SC ¶116; it should be noted that the Latin for the phrase "pride of place" is *principium locum*. All too often, this phrase seems to have been taken to mean a place of honor, when, if it were given a stronger translation, it would mean first place.

The endorsement of chant is thus not as strong as it could have been, and should have been. Several reasons in support of chant are given, reasons of tradition, universality, and contemplation. The principal reason, however, is not given—that the chant is integral to the Roman rite, it sets its normative texts, and that it uniquely expresses the nature of each of its liturgical actions.[8] Pope John Paul II expressed it succinctly:

> Liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the liturgy for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite. The various moments in the liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God's marvels, now expressing praise, supplication, or even sorrow for the experience of human suffering which, however, faith opens to the prospect of Christian hope.[9]

This is, of course, a problem that is wider than the present document. Ever since *Musicam Sacram* (1967), the admission of *alius cantus aptus*, "the anthrax in the envelope" according to Lazlo Dobszay, any other suitable song in place of the proper chants, has meant in practice the virtual abandonment of the Gregorian propers. The present document even represents a progressive erosion of the priorities: for example, the Alleluia verse: "The verses are, as a rule, taken from the lectionary for Mass," (¶161) but the General Instruction states "the verses are taken from the lectionary or the gradual," (GIRM ¶62a) without expressing a preference.

There has, in fact, been a progressive conversion of the Alleluia into another genre that is prejudicial to the Gregorian

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[8] See William Mahrt, "Gregorian Chant as a Paradigm of Sacred Music," pp. 115–29, above.

[9] *Chirograph for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio "Tra le Sollecitudini" on Sacred Music*, ¶5 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musicasacra_en.html>

Alleluia. The present document refers to it only as the gospel acclamation, stating its function to be the welcoming of the Lord in the gospel by the faithful. But the Gregorian Alleluia has two functions: it comes as a meditation chant following upon the reading of the second lesson; as such it is even more melismatic than the gradual, and this contributes to an increasing sense of anticipation of the singing of the gospel, and this is its second purpose—to prepare the congregation to hear the gospel. This is a function more fundamental to the liturgy than the act of the congregation welcoming the Lord, since it prepares the congregation internally as well as externally for the high point of the whole liturgy of the word, the hearing of the gospel—the congregation welcomes the Lord best by being prepared sensitively to hear the gospel.

The problem, wider than the present document, is that the ultimate in Gregorian chants, the gradual, tract, and Alleluia, chants whose liturgical function represents a profound entrance by the congregation into the ethos of the liturgy of the word, have gradually been replaced by, at best, pieces from the divine offices, which were composed for quite different purposes—e.g., the antiphon with the three-fold Alleluia as a text from the Easter Vigil—or, worse, mediocre refrains, repeated too frequently. The congregation's rightful participation in the liturgy of the word is the sympathetic and in-depth hearing of the Word itself. I have consistently maintained and continue to maintain that this fundamental participation is achieved in a far better and more profound way when they hear a gradual or Alleluia beautifully sung than when they are asked to repeat a musically impoverished refrain with similarly impoverished verses. I concur with the notion that these parts should be sung, but I maintain that their simpler forms are only an intermediate step in achieving their singing in the authentic Gregorian forms, where possible, or a practical solution for Masses where a choir cannot yet sing the more elaborate chants or does not sing at all.[10]

Much discussion of repertory throughout the document passes over the facts that Gregorian chant sets the normative

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[10] I will address this issue more substantially in a subsequent article.

texts of the liturgy and that it uniquely expresses the nature of each liturgical action. A particular case in point has to do with the texts of introits and communions. The texts in the *Graduale Romanum* are not the same as those of the *Missale Romanum*, and it is those of the missal which are printed in the disposable missals used in the parishes. I have often been asked, "Where can I find the Gregorian chants for the introits and communions in the missal?" The answer is, you cannot find them, because they were provided for use in spoken Masses only. Christoph Tietze, in these pages, sets out the documentation of this issue: for sung settings, even to music other than Gregorian chant, the texts of the *Graduale Romanum* are to be used.[11] The present document says only that they may be used (¶77). The bishops were to have voted upon a proposal to amend the American text of the GIRM to prescribe the texts of the *Graduale Romanum* for all sung settings, but for some reason, this proposal was withdrawn. However, with the growing incorporation of Gregorian chants into our liturgies, missal publishers should now be persuaded to include both texts.

One is grateful that the place of the organ is asserted: among instruments, it is accorded "pride of place" (¶87). It is praised for its role in accompanying congregational singing, improvisation to accompany the completion of a liturgical action, and playing the great repertory of organ literature, whether for the liturgy or for sacred concerts. The recommendation of other instruments, however, raises a few questions. Instrumentalists are encouraged to play music from the treasury of sacred music, but what music for instrumentalists is meant? Is it the church sonatas of the seventeenth century, requiring an ensemble of string players and keyboard? One hopes it is not a recommendation that the treasury of organ music be played upon the piano or that secular piano music be played.

The wider issue that this raises is the suitability of other instruments. The document does not state the principle reason for the priority of the organ: it is primarily a sacred instrument.

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[11] Christoph Tietze, "*Graduale* or *Missale*: The Confusion Resolved," *Sacred Music*, 133, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 4–13.

Other instruments do not share that distinction. A citation of Old Testament usage of "cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets" (¶89) begs the question of their associations in the present culture. The document proceeds to allow "wind, stringed, or percussion instruments . . . according to longstanding local usage, provided they are truly apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt" (¶90).[12] This avoids the vexed issue of whether instruments with strong associations with popular music, such as those of a rock band, but even the piano, are really apt for sacred use.

A curious omission from the document is that there is no mention of the special status of sacred polyphony, as stated by the *Constitution on the Liturgy*.[13] It mentions a general use of the treasure of sacred music among musics of various periods, styles, and cultures (¶30), and again, in a general statement about the role of sacred music in Catholic schools, music from the past is mentioned alongside other repertories (54), but with no hint that there should be any priority.

There are, alas, some more negative aspects to the document, most of which are survivals from *Music in Catholic Worship*. Perhaps the most pervasive of these is the anthropocentric focus upon the action of the congregation and its external participation, rather than being in balance with a theocentric focus upon giving glory to God. Paragraph 125 states "The primary role of music in the liturgy is to help the members of the gathered assembly[14] to join themselves with the action of Christ and to give voice to the gift of faith." It must be acknowledged that this comes after having said that "the praise and adoration of God leads to music

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[12] ¶393; This citation is from the English translation, which includes authorized American adaptations; this paragraph in the original *Institutio Generalis* (2000) mentions only "instrumenta musica," without further specification.

[13] "Other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action." SC ¶116.

[14] The document consistently uses the word "assembly," rather than "congregation;" while these terms generally have the same meaning, the difference is that the first is principally used in secular contexts, the second in sacred; why do we use the term that has greater secular contexts?

taking on a far greater dimension," but the emphasis in the document is mainly upon what the congregation does, and how music expresses their faith; even the action of Christ is mentioned in the context of how the assembly joins itself to it. I would have said that music has three functions in the liturgy, to give glory to God, to enhance the beauty and sacredness of the liturgy, and to assist in the aedifcation of the faithful. But a quotation of the purpose of music from the council is even more succinct: "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful."[15] Both of these things are theocentric, the first focusing upon the object of what we do, the second focusing upon what God does for us. Neither focuses only upon what we do.

Related to this is an emphasis upon external participation. A good example is the discussion of music during the communion procession. "The singing of the people should be preeminent" (¶189). The purpose of the music is "to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive Communion." It is recommended that they sing easily memorized refrains, "limited in number and repeated often." (¶192) There is no mention of Who is received in communion or the possibility of singing praise and adoration of Him. The focus is upon the attitude of the congregation. There is no addressing of the problem that a devout person may not want to be providing the musical accompaniment to his own procession, but rather be recollecting for that moment when the Lord Himself is received. "Easily-memorized refrains . . . repeated often" is a prescription for triviality. A tendency to over-manage the congregation seems to be in evidence.

There is, however, a statement about the need for participation to be internal, and it is strengthened by a quotation from Pope John Paul II (SttL, ¶12):

> In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must

[15] SC ¶112.

> always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.

The context of this statement is even more powerful, and would have made an even stronger statement about listening:

> Active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness, and listening; indeed it demands it. Worshipers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture . . .[16]

Music in Catholic Worship famously proposed three judgments: musical, liturgical, and pastoral, and even suggested by placing it first that the musical judgment was prior to the other two, though not final. It made a statement about the artistic quality of the music:

> To admit the cheap, the trite, the musical cliché often found in popular songs for the purpose of "instant liturgy" is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure.[17]

This statement turned out to be prophetic, for who has not heard the cheap and trite regularly performed in the liturgy? who would have thought that such a statement had been made in 1972? The seeming priority of the musical judgment in the 1972 document was relegated to the dustbin before the ink was dry on it. So nothing will change, because the present document denies the priority of any of the three judgments, placing the musical judgment last, devoting the least attention to it, and giving the criterion of excellence no more than the statement quoted above, this in a document ostensibly about music.

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[16] *Address of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska,* October 9, 1998, ¶3.

[17] *Music in Catholic Worship*, ¶26.

The discussion of the musical judgment is concluded by a serious misquotation of the Second Vatican Council. "The church has not adopted any particular style of art as her own" (SC ¶123), concluding that the church freely welcomes various styles of music to the liturgy. There are two things wrong with this statement: it comes from the chapter on sacred art and was said about art and architecture. The church has not adopted Romanesque or Gothic or any other style as canonical, but when it comes to music, the church has acknowledged the priority of Gregorian chant and to a lesser degree polyphony. These are styles and they do have priority.

Similarly, even though the document regularly uses terms like sacred music and sacred liturgy, there is practically nothing about what constitutes the sacred and its role in the liturgy. This would be, of course, a controversial topic, since so many of the styles now adopted into liturgical practice are blatantly secular. It seems that as long as the texts are acceptable, no judgments from this document will concern the acceptability of musical styles, however secular—until it comes to weddings and funerals. Finally, a statement comes forth in the context of requests by parties to a wedding that their favorite song be included: "Secular music . . . is not appropriate for the sacred liturgy" (¶220). The same statement is repeated for funerals (¶246).

The discussion of funerals is the occasion of another misrepresentation—in the statement about the purpose of funerals: "The church's funeral rites offer thanksgiving to God for the gift of life that has been returned to him." If one examines the proper texts for the funeral Mass, one finds quite a different picture: there among reminders of eternal life and the resurrection are prayers for the repose of the soul of the departed. Nowhere in the fourteen paragraphs on the music for funerals does this even receive a mention. Even for those of the strongest faith, the death of a beloved is a deprivation, and the funeral must be the occasion for mourning. Likewise, the Gregorian chants for the Requiem Mass are among the most beloved of chants still cherished by the Catholic faithful, because the need for the objectification of mourning is so strongly fulfilled by the chant. There is not a peep in the discussion of funerals about chant. I remember the rather

secular university service held upon the death of a young woman on the faculty, for whom my choir subsequently sang a Requiem Mass. I later saw a colleague from the woman's department—an expert on Nietzsche—who said that he had been to the university service and it had torn him apart; he had then come to the Gregorian Mass and told me that although he was not a believer he had found consolation in it, "a fitting closure to a life."

In spite of the fact that this is a document on music, there is precious little discussion of intrinsically musical matters. Only ¶124 asserts the affective side of music, as difficult to describe, even though it is very important and should be taken into account. So much more could be said about the intrinsic musical characteristics of chant, polyphony, hymnody, and instrumental music in a sacred context. *Sacred Music* will continue to address such issues, particularly since they are crucial to decisions about what music to incorporate into the liturgy. There is even less about beauty, a crucial criterion for liturgy, in my estimation. A couple of references in passing (¶83, 118) show tantalizing possibilities, but they are not realized.

Although the bishops have rightly been concerned about the soundness of the texts being sung in the liturgy, there seems not be a similar concern about the quality of the music; the document seems to encourage the continuation of existing repertories, with little further attention to quality. Still, our task is to work for the improvement of the intrinsic qualities of liturgical music. This is an educational function; one searches in vain for any statement in the document that the function of a musician is to educate the congregation in what is sacred and what is beautiful, to raise their level of participation in the liturgy by giving them better music that they can receive as their own.

What, then, are we to make of this document? We will all find the paragraphs we like and quote them, but their authority is ambiguous: when the document quotes established liturgical law, such as *Musicam Sacram* and the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, their authority is secure; we might as well quote the respective documents. For the rest, since the bishops did not submit them for ratification to the Vatican, they are in a kind of limbo, not liturgical law, but ratified by the bishops. But perhaps

like the doctrine of limbo itself, the document will find itself obsolete in due time. We might view it as a transitional document—the revival of Gregorian chant and excellent liturgical music will progress apace, and a subsequent document, though it may only restate the status quo, will have to accommodate those things *Sacred Music* has perpetually advocated: the sacred and the beautiful as represented by the priority of Gregorian chant and classical polyphony in the service of the liturgy.[18]

[18] I have addressed only a few of the many issues *Sing to the Lord* raises, the ones I have thought most pertinent, but discussion of this document will continue for some time.

10

GREGORIAN CHANT: INVENTION OR RESTORATION?

In a very stimulating article "Sacred Music, Sacred Time," David P. Goldman makes an astonishing claim: "Musicologists have proved that the 'ancient chant' promulgated in the nineteenth century by the Benedictines of Solesmes was, in fact, their own invention rather than a historical reconstruction."[1]

Moreover, when challenged on blogs and in correspondence, he reinforces this claim as being the consensus of scholarship, relying particularly upon the writings of Katherine Bergeron and Leo Treitler.

Katherine Bergeron's book[2] places the revival of chant at Solesmes in the context of the Romantic revival of the past, and makes a number of very valid and interesting correlations with the culture of the time; she does, not, however, claim that the chants published by Solesmes were an "invention;" in fact, indirectly she demonstrates the opposite: the assiduous cultivation of medieval

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[1] David P. Goldman, "Sacred Music, Sacred Time," *First Things*, 197 (November 2009), 31–36, here 31.

[2] Katherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

manuscript sources at Solesmes was the basis of good editions of Medieval chant from its earliest notations.

What was new at Solesmes was a rhythmic method. Over the centuries, the tempo of chant had been gradually slowed, so that each chant note was sung as a beat and, when accompanied, was given a separate chord change. The Solesmes school sensed the need to subsume the individual notes into a larger and quicker phrase rhythm, and as a result made theoretical inferences about the rhythm. Their rhythmic theory is not so much historical as it is systematic; it is the work of performer-theorists more than historians.

Leo Treitler's collected essays[3] represent a lifetime of scholarship on Medieval melody, dealing with questions centering around the relation of oral, written, and literate musical cultures; music and poetry; reading and singing. These extraordinary contributions are not even marred by his view that chant was in a state of improvisational flux until it was written down; this controversial view, while accepted by some, is far from a consensus; see for example the work of Kenneth Levy and David G. Hughes.[4]

Chant is plainsong; its pitches are fixed, but its rhythm is subject to interpretation. Even in the context of a striking variety of rhythmic interpretations, the melodies remain the same melodies. The Easter gradual *Haec dies* sung at St. Gall in the ninth century was essentially the same piece as was sung in Vienna in the eighteenth century or in California in the twenty-first, despite differences of tempo and rhythm. These differences of rhythm are matters of aesthetic judgment—what makes the performance of the piece most beautiful; yes, however you shape the rhythm, it is still essentially the same piece. The method of rhythmic interpretation "invented" at Solesmes is capable of producing a beautiful performance. What differences of pitch as do exist in the Gregorian

[3] Leo Treitler, *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How It Was Made* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[4] Kenneth Levy, *Gregorian Chant and the Carolingians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), and David G. Hughes, "Evidence for the Traditional View of the Transmission of Gregorian Chant," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 40 (1987), 377–404.

tradition are relatively minor variants, some even interesting, constituting slight differences of dialect, but not constituting different, much less "invented" pieces.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the face of a received but moribund tradition of singing, it was crucial that the revival at Solesmes be of a historic repertory; what was revived carried the authority of the ages, not just of the distant past. It was almost as important as the revival of singing of Gregorian chant is today in the face of a moribund tradition of parish music among us. This is not the revival of an invention of the nineteenth century, but of the perennial music of the Roman Rite. Even in the splendid variety of dialects, these chants, intrinsic parts of the immemorial liturgy, are the same pieces heard by Charlemagne, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John Vianney, among a great cloud of witnesses.

CHANTS



11

WORD-PAINTING AND FORMULAIC CHANT

Singers of Gregorian chant have often delighted in those exceptional melodies which seem to represent their texts in particularly vivid ways. We who have been schooled in the music of the Renaissance and later are quick to notice such evident word-painting as in the alleluia verse *Angelus Domini* for Easter Monday,[1] where we see a melodic descent on *descendit*, a rolling motion on *revolvit*, and notes of an even pitch on *sedebat super eum*. We have often taken care to sing the communion antiphon *Passer invenit*[2] so that the liquescence on *et turtur* imitates the cooing of a turtle dove. We have understood our singing of the

This article was included in *Cum Angelis Canere: Essays on Sacred Music and Pastoral Liturgy in Honour of Richard J. Schuler*, ed. Robert A. Skeris (St. Paul, Minn.: Catholic Church Music Associates, 1990).

[1] *Graduale Triplex* (hereafter abbreviated *GT*; Sablé sur Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1979), p. 201; *The Liber Usualis* with introduction and rubrics in English (hereafter abbreviated *LU*; Tournai: Desclée, 1963), p. 786. The *Graduale Triplex* is the text of the *Gradual Romanum* (Sablé sur Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1974) with staffless neumes from two traditions added; it thus provides immediate confirmation of the antiquity of the chants with neumes; page references, however, are identical with the *Graduale Romanum* of 1974.

[2] *GT*, pp. 306f.; *LU*, p. 556.

offertory *Jubilate Deo, universa terra*[3] to be a literal representation of the Psalmist's injunction to sing joyfully by singing a *jubilus*, a nearly wordless melisma.

This view of chant has recently come into question, and at that, the question is not entirely new. John Stevens, in a compendious treatise, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050–1350*, devotes an extended discussion to text setting in Gregorian chant;[4] in summarizing his results, he says that he has rejected

> relations between text and melody which seemed to rest upon a direct apprehension, a direct representation or expression, of *ideas* in musical terms . . . . On the rare occasions when it (the music) responds at all to the detailed meaning, it responds to the *sound* of that meaning as realized in the *sound* of the words, whether the words are onomatopoeic or expressive of human emotion.[5]

He views the relation of word to music in all chant as indifferent, neutral, essentially no more engaged than in a psalm tone, and believes that

> although certain aspects of the chant may properly be, and were, talked about in rhetorical terms, this central function of rhetoric (human persuasion), is . . . irrelevant to its understanding.[6]

Moreover, he is convinced that in the case of formulaic chants, particularly graduals, tracts, and responsories, "there

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[3] *GT*, pp. 227f.; *LU*, pp. 486f.

[4] John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Chapter 8, "Speech and Melody: Gregorian Chant," pp. 268–307; for two other views, see Terence Bailey, "Word-Painting and the Romantic Interpretation of Chant," and Andrew Hughes, "Word Painting in a Twelfth-Century Office," *Beyond the Moon: Festschrift Luther Dittmer*, ed. Bryan Gillingham and Paul Merkley (Ottawa: The Institute of Medieval Music, 1990), pp. 1–15 and 16–27.

[5] Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages,* p. 307.

[6] Ibid., p. 299.

seems to be little point in attempting a detailed analysis," since the formulaic system precludes attention to individual words. For him the better place to seek interesting text-music relations is in the freely-composed chants.[7]

Stevens is actually somewhat moderate in his views; he accepts, for example, the liquescent neumes of *Passer invenit* as setting the sound of the text, the onomatopoeic element being already present in the word *turtur* itself. He also accepts the jubilus of *Jubilate Deo* as an "expression of human emotion."[8] Moreover, one must readily concede his objection to overly fanciful descriptions, such as Dom Gajard's of the "jubilate" melisma, the phrase climbs by a succession of leaps, in the manner of a mighty wave hurling itself into an attack on some cliff,[9] since God is not properly approached as "some cliff," nor is singing joyfully easily compared to an attack.

In all of this Stevens is actually refining the position of Willi Apel,[10] whose view of the whole question is much less qualified and more negative. Although Apel's comprehensive and fundamental work is solidly founded upon the mainstream of European scholarship, he distances himself on this point from the views of Gevaert, Frere, Gérold, Johner, Wagner, and Ferretti:

> I can only register my opposition against attempts to explain Gregorian chant as the result of mental processes so obviously indicative of nineteenth-century emotionalism, so obviously derived from an acquaintance with the art of Wagner and Brahms.[11]

Apel provides reasoned refutations of several traditionally interpreted passages, and points out some fairly ambiguous places

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[7] Ibid., p. 289.

[8] Likewise Bailey (pp. 4f.) accepts this long melisma as a kind of general rhetorical emphasis, but rejects any text expression in *Passer invenit* (pp. 9–11).

[9] Quoted by Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages,* p. 292.

[10] Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), pp. 301–304.

[11] Ibid., p. 303.

usually taken to be word-painting. One of his arguments is at first glance most convincing. It is a comparative argument for chants based upon melodic formulae: When the same melody sets a number of diverse texts, then the very adaptability of the melody precludes its being able to represent the text individually enough to be word-painting. His final example epitomizes his method, using the antiphon *Ascendo ad Patrem*.[12] This is one of the forty-nine antiphons classified by Gevaert as belonging to a formulaic melody type (Thème 19).[13] In it the normal formula G b c d e d[14] is altered to include the high g: G b c d e g d; it is supposed that this alteration represents the idea of ascent in the text. In refutation Apel shows that another antiphon of the same type (one not included by Gevaert) has the same figure but speaks of descent.[15]

Both Stevens and Apel deny, in one way or another, the unambiguous existence of word-painting in chant.[16] Their denial is based upon empirical argumentation: objective proof cannot be established for particular instances of putative word-painting, since in other instances the same word is set otherwise. Moreover, they both seem to assume that if word-painting is to be applicable to chant at all, it ought to be generally applicable—texts which mention ascent as a rule ought to be set to an ascending melody; for Stevens, the neutral quality of the melody on the word "Resurrexi" in the introit for Easter Sunday raises doubts about any theory of word-painting.[17]

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[12] *LU*, p. 845.

[13] Francois Auguste Gevaert, *La Mélopée antique dans le chant de l'église latine* (1895; Reprint, Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967), pp. 297–301.

[14] Pitches are here designated according to the medieval gamut: Gamma (bottom of the bass clef) A-G, a-g, and aa-ee. Middle C is thus simply c.

[15] *Descendi in hortum,* in *Antiphonaire monastique, XIIe Siècle, Codex 601 de la Bibliothèque capitulaire de Lucques, Paléographie musicale*, Vol. IX (Solesmes, Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1906; reprint, Bern: Lang, 1974), p. 458; Apel, *Gregorian Chant,* p. 304.

[16] Apel admits the *possibility* of literal representations of "high" and "low," but he cannot determine whether these are accidental or intentional, citing examples in which the similar words occur with opposite figures (pp. 303f.); Stevens is of the same mind concerning "ascent" and "descent" (p. 302).

[17] Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 302.

The solution depends upon having a clear definition of "word-painting" and placing it in the context of the relation of text and melody. Word-painting is akin to rhetorical figures, embellishments used at certain points in a speech for certain effects, particularly those rhetorical figures of thought usually translated as "vivid description." Quintilian, for example, describes *enargeia* (and similarly *evidentia*, *representatio*, *hypotyposis*, *diatyposis*) as a figure "by which a complete image of a thing is somehow painted in words."[18] Now if the rhetorical figure is the use of words to "paint" a vivid picture, then in music its analogue is the use of tones to depict a vivid, concrete image, an image arising almost of necessity from the text, and this is what is generally meant by word-painting.[19]

The analogy to oratory thus provides the critical distinction. The rules of grammar, which are structural and obligatory, apply to all of speech, while the rhetorical figures, which are embellishments and voluntary, to be chosen for the places where they are most effective, might occur only at a few particular points in a speech. Likewise for chant: Stevens is quite right to insist that the basic construction of Gregorian melodies is grammatical, that is, the smaller and larger grammatical elements of the texts are the basis for corresponding smaller and larger musical phrases.[20]

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[18] "Quo tota rerum imago quodammodo verbis depingitur;" Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, VIII, iii, 63 (Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966); vol. III, pp. 244–247.

[19] Thus the precise musical term might better have been the British term "tone-painting" (similar to the German *Tonmalerei*) , the commonly used "word-painting" being a term borrowed too literally from rhetoric, *non mutatis mutandis*.

[20] Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, pp. 283–286; Peter Wagner, *Einführung in die gregorianischen Melodien, III: Gregorianische Formenlehre: Eine choralische Stilkunde* (Leipzig, 1921; reprint: Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), pp. 281–294, gave a demonstration of that principle in relation to the bipartite structure of psalm verses; Mathias Bielitz, *Musik und Grammatik: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Musiktheorie*, Beiträge zur Musikforschung, Band 4 (Munich: Emil Katzbichler, 1977), Leo Treitler and Ritva Jonsson, "Medieval Music and Language: A Reconsideration of the Relationship," *Studies in the History of Music*, Vol. 1: *Music and Language* (New York: Broude Brothers, 1983), pp. 1–23, and Calvin M. Bower, "The Grammatical Model of Musical

Analysis of this kind of structure is valid for any piece. Word-painting as a particular figure, occurs only exceptionally, and may be analyzed as something over and above the structure of the melody, an embellishment, an additional coloration that adds a vividness of expression at a few apt points in the repertory.

The problem posed by Apel and Stevens, however, remains: how is this word painting to be identified? They deny an objective basis for the understanding of word-painting, and Apel appeals to the formulaic character of the chants in refutation. What they deny is what the present study proposes to demonstrate; moreover, the basis is precisely the melodic formulae. Considering a piece in the context of its formulae illuminates what is unique; considering what is unique suggests apparent reasons for the departure from the formula. Sometimes there is apparent and explicit representation of something particular in the text; sometimes this is evidently word-painting.

The method of the present study is to explore different ways in which melodies relate to formulae in order to clarify and distinguish potential instances of word-painting. Each of the following examples falls into a context of melodic formulae, that is, it relates to a melody or melodic system which pertains to several texts; each example also bears an unusual relationship to the formula; and upon close examination, each illustrates an interesting kind of text-representation, often explicit and literal enough to be called word-painting. Willi Apel's analytic tables of the formulaic chants, particularly the graduals[21] and tracts,[22] and

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Understanding in the Middle Ages," in *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, edited by Patrick J. Gallagher and Helen Damico (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 133–145, among others, have discussed the basis of this grammatical structure in the musical theorists of the Middle Ages. It is not surprising that the monastic theorists who established the basic theory of chant should have placed music in so directly grammatical a context, since, in the curriculum for the internal monastic schools prescribed by Charlemagne, music followed directly upon grammar.

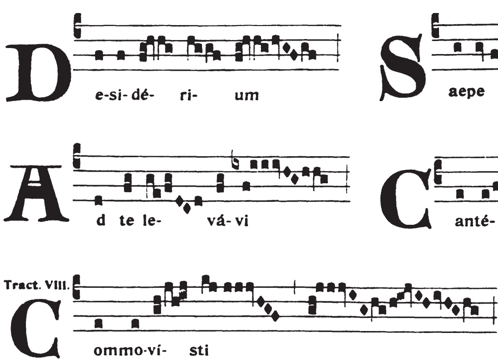
[21] Apel, *Gregorian Chant,* pp. 344–363.

[22] Apel, *Gregorian Chant,* pp. 312–330.

Gevaert's classifications of antiphons for the divine office[23] have been the basis for ready comparison of the formulae.

The highly formulaic tracts of mode eight provide a clear context for examining an exceptional passage closely. The tract *Commovisti*[24] has such a passage, the intonation of the initial word; moreover, it is a passage in contention. Apel disapprovingly cites Gérold, who sees in it "the tendency to express in music the action of the Eternal shaking the earth."[25] The context of the eighteen medieval tracts in mode eight[26] sets this initial melisma in very clear relief. Of the eighteen tracts, all but the present one use an intonation formula that is found in at least one other tract, i.e., this is the only one with a unique intonation. This intonation, in addition, is substantially longer than any of the others.[27]

EXAMPLE 1
Intonations of Tracts in Mode Eight



[23] Gevaert, *La mélopée antique*.

[24] *GT*, pp. 89f.; *LU*, p. 507.

[25] Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, p.302.

[26] In this and the following discussions, only those pieces from the basic medieval repertory are included; the fact that two other tracts of recent composition employ the same intonation formula as *Commovisti* is relatively immaterial to the argument. Cf. Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, p. 319.

[27] Its longest melisma comprises 27 notes, while of the others eleven have melismas comprising only four notes; one each has nine, ten, eleven, and 12, and two have seventeen. Cf. Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, p. 319.

In addition its melody has an interesting shape: it moves through the G-c fourth in mainly stepwise motion, adding a note above and below once, and making three complete cycles of ascent and descent. While it has a certain distinctive contour, this exceptionally long intonation is mainly a multiple reiteration of the same motion, suggesting motion for its own sake. Even though Gérold's characterization of it might be overly imaginative, he is not far from the mark, since all of the features mentioned point out the fact that this melody serves as a vivid representation of motion itself, thus setting its text "commovisti."

The graduals of mode seven, being less highly formulaic, form a context for judging passages which are exceptional within their mode in that they stand outside the system of melodic formulae entirely.[28] Of the twelve which Apel analyses, two have responds which do not show any motives in common with the others:[29] *Qui sedes, Domine*[30] and *Miserere mihi, Domine*.[31] Each has an unusually wide range (D-aa and D-g respectively)[32] and significant portions of melody in both extremes of range. In at least one of these, this seems to be for the purpose of an exceptional representation of the text.

Qui sedes, Domine, very near its beginning, on the word "super," approaches a high g by skip and follows it with two successive descending skips; it then soon descends to a low D, repeating it through the phrase "excita potentiam tuam, et veni." Peter Wagner describes the first of these events as "a powerful emphasis

[28] The highly formulaic graduals are in mode 2 (19 pieces listed by Apel in the medieval repertory) and mode 5 (45 pieces); the less formulaic graduals are in modes 3 and 4 (13 pieces), mode 1 (15 pieces), modes 7 (12 pieces) and mode 8 (3 pieces), Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, pp. 344–363.

[29] Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, pp. 356f.

[30] *GT*, p. 22; *LU*, pp. 335f.

[31] *GT*, pp. 103f.

[32] Of the seventh-mode graduals considered by Apel, the responds generally range either F-f or G-g; the verses use more formulae in common, and the verses of the two graduals under consideration do not differ in range from the mode-seven graduals as a group.

Example 2

Gradual Responsory: *Qui sedes, Domine*



upon a pictorial image at the expense of logical coherence."[33] Wagner is addressing a phenomenon known to rhetoricians; some even give it the status of a figure of speech. They call it a *solecism*, a relation of words that does not make complete grammatical sense;[34] at least one medieval theorist as well made direct application of *solecism* to melodic analysis.[35] At the beginning of the piece, "super" sounds like a part that is distinctly out of range, particularly since it is rather abruptly approached and left by skip, and thus the passage which follows, a much more stable melody, gives the temporary impression of being in the proper range of the

33 Wagner, *Gregorianische Formenlehre*, p. 300.

34 The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (attributed to Cicero and widely read in the Middle Ages) disapproves of the solecism simply as a fault, ps.-Cicero, *Ad C. Herennium de ratione dicendi*, IV.xii.17 (Loeb Classical Library, Cicero, Vol. I; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 270f.; but Quintilian devotes an extended discussion of positive, rhetorical use of the solecism, *Institutio oratoria*, l.v.34–54.

35 Ps.-Joannes de Muris speaks of the communion *Principes persecuti* sunt me as having a fault, which is like a solecism in grammar; a most unconvenional passage occurs in this chant, which could be called a solecism: a succession of upward leaps, D G b c a; that this might be solecism in the sense of a rhetorical figure rather than a mere fault is suggested strongly by the fact that it occurs on "super eloquia." *Summa musicae*, in Martin Gerbert, *Scriptores Ecclesiastici de Musica Sacra Potissimum* (St. Blasien, 1784; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963), Vol. lll, p. 238; Cf. also Frederick Sturges Andrews, *Medieval Modal Theory*, Ph. D. diss., Cornell, 1935, pp. 139–141.

piece. The verse, however, proceeds to develop the upper part of the range coherently, so that in retrospect the listener understands that it was the lower passage "excita . . ." which was out of range. The normative character of the upper part of the range is confirmed by the fact that the verse begins with a long melisma common to several mode-seven graduals (Apel's formula D10).

The initial use of the high extreme of range, even to the point of threatening the coherence of the melody on a word meaning "above", and above something that is normally conceived to be on high (Cherubim), expresses extreme height extremely and is word-painting of the most evident sort. But what of the passage on "excita . . ."? If, in retrospect, this appears to be the part more fundamentally out of range, and on the low side, is there not something "low" in the text which might be the reason for its extreme range? The phrase is an imperative, "Stir up thy might, O Lord, and come." This addresses the power of the Lord as dormant, waiting to be invoked; the low pitch represents the point of departure, His present position, that state of repose from which the Lord will come, having stirred up His might. Thus both extremes of range in this piece depict aspects of God—above the Cherubim and in a state of waiting.

The other mode-seven gradual respond without common formulaic material, *Miserere mihi, Domine*, uses similar contrasts of range, but for a different purpose. The respond asks for mercy and healing, and is set in the lower part of the range (the plagal part, D-d). The verse begins with the word "conturbata" set to a striking figure which rises by a fifth and then a third and proceeds through several pressus and strophicus, touching upon a high aa at one point. At the least, the pronounced contrasts of range in this piece must represent a contrasting expression of the emotion of the text, the lower of humility in asking for mercy, and the higher of distress. The higher melody on "conturbata" uses a formula common to three mode-seven gradual verses, but the initial direct ascent of a fifth plus a third followed by a descending sequence of pressus and strophicus is unique to this piece. This exceptional ascent, contrasting so strongly with the low range of the respond, together with the intense singing of the pressus is surely a more vivid and direct expression of the state of mind of

the speaker. Both of these non-formulaic mode-seven gradual responds, therefore, in place of using the formulae of the mode, exploit unexpected ranges for explicit representation of their texts, in one case by literal or metaphorical spatial analogies, in the other, by contrasting human emotions.

The antiphons to the psalms of the divine office are among the most formulaic chants. If the argument against text-representation from the formulaic nature of chants has any validity, it should apply particularly well to these pieces. Apel's first example of chants to which a pictorial or specific expressive interpretation has been given (and against which he argues) is the antiphon *Ecce ancilla Domini*.[36] He cites Gevaert's description: "the melodic line, sweetly bowing until the end of the chant, renders with a charming naivety the profound reverence of the Virgin before the messenger of God."[37] The implication of his argument (which he makes explicit in the case of *Ascendo ad Patrem*)[38] is that since other chants with other texts use the same melody, the melody itself cannot thus be an expression of some unique aspect of this text. Is this true for *Ecce ancilla Domini?*

At first glance, the formulaic context seems to rule out an intrinsic representation of text, for the melody type to which it belongs (Gevaert's Thème 18) comprises no less than 50 antiphons on such diverse texts as "De profundis," "Elevamini, portae aeternales," "Ego dormivi," "Terra tremuit," and others,[39] texts which might have inspired pictorial settings, though quite different ones.

Closer inspection, however, shows *Ecce ancilla* to be one of nine antiphons classed as a sub-group, a fixed melody identified by the title of the psalmodic antiphon *Collocet eum Dominus*.[40] The texts of these nine antiphons have, in fact, nothing in common which could suggest so concrete an image as Gevaert's

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[36] *LU*, p. 1417.

[37] Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, p. 302; cf. Gevaert, *La mélopée antique,* p. 153.

[38] Apel, *Gregorian Chant,* p. 304.

[39] Gevaert, *La mélopée antique*, pp. 289–294.

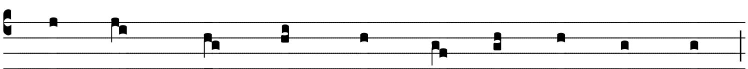
[40] Gevaert, *La mélopée antique*, pp. 293f.

"profound reverence of the Virgin before the messenger of God." Yet, surprisingly, they do have things in common which relate to the shape of their melody and which set them off from the general repertory of antiphons.

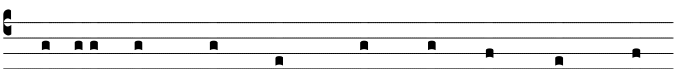
The initial melodic figure begins on the reciting tone and makes a direct, stepwise descent to the final.

EXAMPLE 3

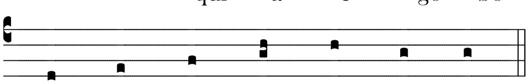
Antiphons on the Fixed Melody: *Collocet eum Dominus*



1. Cól-	lo-	cet	e-	um	[ ]	Dó-	[ ]	mi-	nus
2. Hoc	est	præ-	cép-	tum	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	me-	um
3. Ec-	ce	an-	cíl-	la	[ ]	Dó-	[ ]	mi-	ni
4. Ec-	ce	com-	plé-	ta	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	sunt	
5. A-	quam	quam	e-	go	[ ]	dé-	[ ]	de-	ro
6. Be-	ne	fun-	dá-	ta	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	est	
7. Tol-	le	quod	[ ]	tu-	um	est	et	val-	de



		cum——		prin-	[ ]	cí-	pi-	bus
	ut	di-	li-	gá-	tis	ín-	vi-	cern
		fi———		at	[ ]	mi———		hi
ómnia	quæ	dic-	ta	sunt	per	án-	ge-	lum
	qui	bí-	be-	rit	ex	e———		a
		Do-	mus	[ ]	[ ]	Dó-	mi-	[ ]
		qui-	a	e-	go	bo-	nus	[ ]



pó-	[ ]	pu-	li	[ ]	su-	i.	
si-	cut	di-	lé-	xi	vos.	[ ]	
se-	cún-	dum	ver-	bum	tu-	um.	
de	vír-	gi-	ne	Ma-	rí-	a.	
non	si———		ti-	et	un-	quam.	
ni	su-	pra	fir-	nam	pe-	tri.	
sum	[ ]	di-	cit	[ ]	Dó-	mi-	nus.

The texts either speak of the action of God from on high[41] or are an imperative (grammatically or in content);[42] one could be construed to be both;[43] only one does not represent either kind of text,[44] and it uses the fixed melody only for its first half, so it is already distinct from the rest of the group.

Those antiphons whose texts represent the action of God from on high depend on a spatial analogy: the melody descends from an initial high point to a point of repose below it. Those which set an imperative represent the text by an extension of the basic grammatical analogue: they capture something of the tone of voice of that sentence type.[45] While a declarative sentence generally begins low, rises high, and descends again, an imperative expresses its command from a firm high-pitched beginning and descends to its conclusion. (A question, in contrast, expresses its open-ended character by ending on a high pitch.)[46] There may be, then, more of the grammatical than just the articulation of phrases; the phrases themselves may have melodic contours which derive from the characteristic inflection of their particular sentence-type.

As with so many rather general statements about the relationship of text to melody, the question remains, is such a melodic shape really a typical part of the wider Gregorian vocabulary? Can the witness of this one small group of antiphons suggest a more general correlation of initial melodic shape with grammatical function? A simple test can be made. The alphabetic index of

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41 *Collocet enim Dominus, Aquam quam ego dedero*, and possibly *Bene fundata est*.

42 *Ecce ancilla Domini, Ecce completa sunt, Tolle quod tuum est*, and *Sic enim volo manere*; "ecce" is an exclamation implying an imperative; its translation into English is generally into the imperative "behold" or "see."

43 *Hoc est preceptum meum*.

44 *Stephanus autem*.

45 Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages,* p. 303, takes this to be "semi-onomatopoeic," being simply the setting of a single word representing "in stylized form human expressive cries."

46 See, for example, in the Introit *Dominus illuminatio mea* (*GT*, p. 288; *LU*, p. 998), the question "a quo trepidabo?" which is set to a very unusual rising melodic cadence, F-G-a.

Gregorian incipits[47] allows a survey of a large number of chant beginnings. When all of the chants beginning with the word "Ecce" are examined for their initial melodic contour[48] and compared with a sampling of chants not beginning with that word,[49] the following percentages are obtained for chants whose melodies begin with the descending formula:

Chants beginning "Ecce": 21.8% (31 out of 142)
Chants not beginning "Ecce": 13.9% (146 out of 1048)

These percentages show that such a descending beginning is far from normative; nevertheless, the difference is statistically significant enough to be able to say that in the wide repertory of Gregorian melodies, "Ecce" is more often set to the descending melody; in other words, the imperative character of the phrase may be a factor in the shape of the melodies. These antiphons suggest an important conclusion: what can be found in a demonstrable and objective way in the representation of text by music may be a much more general relation than most authors have sought, and may not be only a single one. The same initial descending figure can represent sometimes a spatial analogy, and sometimes the tone of voice of a sentence inflection, depending upon the text which is set.

That an unusual initial descending melody may set the imperative is corroborated by the well-known *Ite, missa est ad libitum* given with Mass II in the modern *Kyriale*.[50] The possible origin, late and secular, of this melody[51] does not detract from the fact

[47] John R. Bryden and David G. Hughes, *An Index of Gregorian Chant*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

[48] Bryden and Hughes, pp. 143–149; for the present purposes the initial descending figure searched was the first six notes descending below and not rising higher than the initial pitch; ie., in Bryden and Hughes' notation, the first five digits are either a negative number or zero.

[49] All of the chants of every tenth page beginning page one in Bryden and Hughes were examined for the descending melodic beginning.

[50] *LU*, p. 22.

[51] Wilhelm Fischer, "Die Herkunft des 'Ite, missa est' V. toni," *Festschrift Alfred Orel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hellmut Federhofer (Vienna: Rohrer, 1960), pp. 67–72.

that as the only one of the melismatic *Ite* melodies which does not depend upon its corresponding *Kyrie* melody, it expresses an extravagant melodic descent of a whole octave, which is then repeated and followed by a modest arch-shaped cadential clause.

A fixed formula, a single figure setting only a word or two, may find employment in several chants whose texts and melodies otherwise differ, and the changing context can make it clear that exactly the same notes can bear several different meanings as that context changes. This occurs in a most interesting way in a group of mode-one offertories which provides an opportunity for a close comparison of text-representation in a formulaic context.[52] This group includes the offertories *Viri Galilaei*,[53] *Stetit Angelus*,[54] *Justorum animae*,[55] *Erue, Domine*,[55] and *Tu es Petrus*.[57] *Viri Galilaei* seems to be the oldest chant, though not a part of the original Roman repertory before its transmission to the North. *Stetit Angelus* is of later composition, but still from a time when the melodic formulations were used freely and flexibly, so that the piece is essentially a new composition. *Justorum animae* and *Erue, Domine* are contrafacta of *Stetit Angelus*, and derive all of their musical shape and sequence of material from that piece. *Tu es Petrus* is a contrafactum of *Stetit Angelus* for its first half, but the second half is composed of other material.

52 René Jean Hesbert, O.S.B., first called attention to them and commented briefly on the relation of text and music in "La Messe 'Omnes gentes' du VIIe Dimanche après la Pentecôte et 'l'Antiphonale Missarum' Romain," *Revue Grégorienne*, XVII (1932), pp. 81–89, 170–179; XVIII (1933), pp. 1–14: particularly XVIII, p. 7, n. 2.

53 *Offertoriale triplex cum versiculis* (hereafter abbreviated *OT*, Sablé sur Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1985), pp. 172f.; *GT*, pp. 237f. The *Offertoriale Triplex* is a reprint of Carolus Ott, *Offertoriale sive versus offertoriorum* (Tournai: Desclée, 1935) with the addition of staffiess neumes from two traditions; page references apply to both editions.

54 *OT*, pp. 170f.; *GT*, p. 610; *LU*, pp. 1656f.

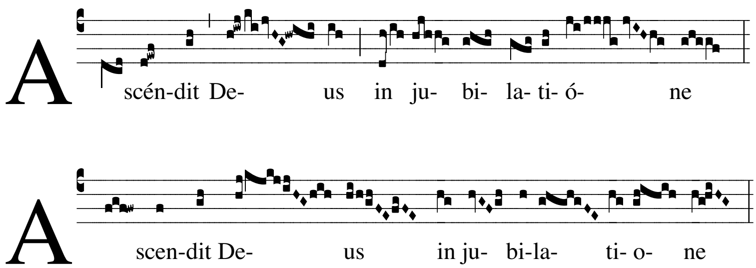
55 *OT*, pp. 144f; *GT*, pp. 468f.; *LU*, p. 1172.

56 *OT*, pp. 177f.

57 *OT*, pp. 187f.; *LU*, p. 1333.

The genesis of *Viri Galilaei* and its liturgical relation to another mode-one offertory, *Ascendit Deus*,[58] is of considerable interest. *Ascendit* is most likely the original offertory for Ascension Thursday, witness its psalmodic text and its presence in the Old Roman repertory.[59] Its Old Roman version suggests an interesting point about word-painting in its Gregorian version.[60]

Example 4
Ascendit Deus, Beginning of Gregorian and Old Roman Versions



The Gregorian version begins with a soaring ascent upon the text "Ascendit Deus." This is an example of direct word- painting, setting the idea of ascent by a rising melody and emphasizing the very word which most typifies the whole feast. Each of the next two phrases begins with an upward leap of a fifth. Since the rest of the text includes mention of "in voce tubae," the ascent of the fifth may well represent the voice of a trumpet, singing the characteristic interval which an open trumpet plays.[61]

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[58] *LU*, p. 849; *GT*, p. 237.

[59] Cf. René Jean Hesbert, *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex* (Brussels: Vromant, 1935; reprint, Rome: Herder, 1967), pp. lvi–lvii.

[60] *Die Gesänge des altrömischen Graduale, Vat. lat. 5319*, edited by Margareta Landwehr-Melnicki, with an introduction by Bruno Stäblein, Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi, Vol. II (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), pp.322f.

[61] The leap of a fifth is often employed in a metaphorical sense—it accompanies words signifying "proclamation" or "judgment;" the sound of the trumpet is then

The Old Roman version, though its final is E, is clearly a version of the same text and melody. It includes, however, neither of the potential features of word-painting seen in the Gregorian version. That the ascending fifth is word-painting is not unassailable; it could be only a matter of clearly establishing the D mode in the Gregorian version.[62] In any case, the ascent on "Ascendit" remains, and this situation suggests that sometimes aspects of clear word-painting in Gregorian melodies may have been developed in the Frankish North after their reception from Rome.[63] Remarkably, the offertory *Viri Galilaei* also sets the idea of ascent with an exceptional rising melisma.

Viri Galilaei is not documented in Roman, Milanese, or Mozarabic sources,[64] and thus it could be a new composition of the Frankish North. Its entry into the Gregorian corpus is interesting. According to Hesbert's learned and well-founded speculations, it may have been composed for the new observance of the

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a musical metaphor for the idea of proclamation; see, for example, the gradual, *Custodi me* (*GT*, pp. 304f.; *LU*, pp. 1021f.), in the verse on 'judicium," a part of the verse which is non-formulaic in Apel's analysis (Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, p. 351). Andrew Hughes's dictionary of chant words is designed to pursue just such a topic, cf. Hughes, "Word Painting in a Twelfth-Century Office," p. 27, n. 14.

[62] This difference between Gregorian and Old Roman versions of other chants has been illustrated by Hendrik van der Werf in such pieces as the introits *Puer natus est* and *Factus est Dominus*; *The Emergence of Gregorian Chant: A Comparative Study of Ambrosian, Roman, and Gregorian Chant*, 2 vols. (Rochester, N.Y.: published by the author, 1983), Vol. I, Part 2, pp. 73–75 and 16–18 respectively.

[63] A similar case is the *Alleluia, Angelus Domini*, where the text "revolvit" receives a series of torculus figures suggesting turning or rolling. Apel rightly points out that the notation of St. Gall 359 does not contain these torculus figures, inferring that the depiction of the text stems only from the tenth or eleventh century (Apel, *Gregorian Chant,* p. 303). Thus in this case, the word-painting was accrued by the piece; by the addition of rather few notes, an ordinary passage became one of vivid description, even after the piece had been set into notation.

[64] Kenneth Levy, "Toledo, Rome, and the Legacy of Gaul," *Early Music History*, IV (1984): 89.

Vigil of the Ascension.[65] Of the text-sources collated in the *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, it is among the offertories assigned to the following Ascension observances (the asterisk indicates a reference only:[66]

Source	Vigil of Ascension	Ascension Thursday	Sunday after Ascension
Rheinau	Deus Deus meus	Viri Galilaei	Ascendit Deus
Mont-Blandin		Ascendit Deus Item aliud Off. Viri Galilaei	
Compiégne	*Viri	Ascendit Deus	Viri Galilaei Item Off. *Lauda anima
Corbie		Ascendit	*Lauda anima
Senlis	Viri Galilaei	Ascendit	Lauda anima

Of all of the offertories in the entire *Sextuplex*, *Viri Galilaei* has the most variable assignment. It would seem that *Viri Galilaei* could not have replaced *Ascendit Deus* as the more ancient chant unless another day could be found for the latter (the following Sunday in Rheinau). Where there was no other day for it, it could have been given as an alternative on the feast itself (Mont-Blandin). This is not entirely consistent with the theory of its being a new composition; rather, it looks more like a situation which accommodates two venerable chants from different traditions, one more ancient, generally assigned to the feast, and yet another one, also desirable in relation to the feast, assigned to an ancillary day, the situation described by Kenneth Levy.[67] Thus *Viri*

[65] Hesbert, *Sextuplex*, p. lxvi.

[66] Ibid., pp. 120–123.

[67] Levy, "Toledo, Rome, and the Legacy of Gaul," pp. 91f.

G*alilaei*, although it is not documented in Roman, Milanese, or Mozarabic traditions, could have Gallican origins, a venerable melody preserved by a long memory. Moreover, such Gallican survivals are characterized by non-psalmodic texts and prominent word-painting.

Its occurrence in later notated sources looks somewhat different, however; the following tabulation is drawn from readily available published facsimiles and arranged in approximately chronological order (the asterisk indicates only a reference):[68]

Source	Vigil of Ascension	Ascension Thursday	Sunday after Ascension
Laon (ca. 930)	Viri Galilaei *Ascendit Deus	Ascendit Deus *Viri	*Lauda anima
Chartres (end 10c.)		Ascendit Deus Viri Galilaei	*Lauda anima
Einsiedeln (10–11 c.)		Viri Galilaei Ascendit	*Lauda anima
Mont-Renaud (10–11 c.?)	*Viri Galilaei	Ascendit Deus Viri Galilaei	*Lauda anima
Benevento VI-33 (beg. 11 c.)	Ascendit Deus	Viri Galilaei	*Lauda anima
Bamberg 6 (ca. 1000)		Viri Galilaei Ascendit Deus	*Viri *Ascendit
St. Gall 339 (1st half, 11 c.)		Viri Galilaei	Lauda anima
Bologna (1st half, 11 c.)	*Lauda anima	Viri Galilaei	Ascendit Deus
St. Yrieix (2nd half, 11 c.)	Ascendit Deus	Viri Galilaei	*Lauda anima
Benevento VI-34 (11-12 c.)	Ascendit Deus	Viri Galilaei	*Ascendit
Graz (ca. 1150)	Viri Galilaei	Ascendit Deus	*Viri

[68] Most of the sources appear in *Paléographie musicale* (Solesmes: Abbaye de St. Pierre, 1889–1958 and Berne: Lang, 1968-present; reprint, Berne: Lang, 1971–74), Vols. I (St. Gall 339), IV (Einsiedeln), X (Laon), XI (Chartres), XIII

The earlier sources show *Ascendit Deus* still as the principal offertory for Ascension, with *Viri Galilaei* as an alternate, but the later ones show that *Viri Galilaei* frequently replaced it, relegating it to the place of the vigil, the following Sunday, or as the alternative on the feast. Hesbert speculates that the text *Viri Galilaei*, already used for the Ascension introit, was a preferable text for the feast, being drawn from the account of the Ascension in the *Acts of the Apostles*; this could justify the gradual replacement of the psalmodic text *Ascendit Deus*.[69] This preference was perhaps stronger, because it did not sacrifice the extraordinary representation of the text so suitable to the day.

These five offertories, of which *Viri Galilaei* seems to be the oldest, share a great deal of melodic material in common; they thus provide several opportunities to examine questions of word-painting in the context of formulaic chants. Perhaps the most interesting question relates to the role of formula within a single piece.

Viri Galilaei is based upon a text from the *Acts of the Apostles*:[70]

Et cum haec dixisset, videntibus illis, elevatus est: et nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum. Cumque intuerentur in caelum euntem illum, ecce duo viri astiterunt juxta illos in vestibus albis, qui et dixerunt: Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in caelum? hic Jesus, qui assumptus est a	And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into

(St. Yrieix), XIV (Benevento VI–34), XVI (MontRenaud), XVIII (Bologna), XIX (Graz), XX (Benevento VI–33); Bamberg 6 appears as Vol. II of *Monumenta Palaeographica Gregoriana* (Miinsterschwarzach: Internationale Gesellschaft fiir Studien des Gregorianischen Chorals, n.d.); the dating is drawn from John Emerson, "Sources, MS: Western plainchant," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. XVII, pp. 611–634.

69 Hesbert, *Sextuplex*, p. lxvi.

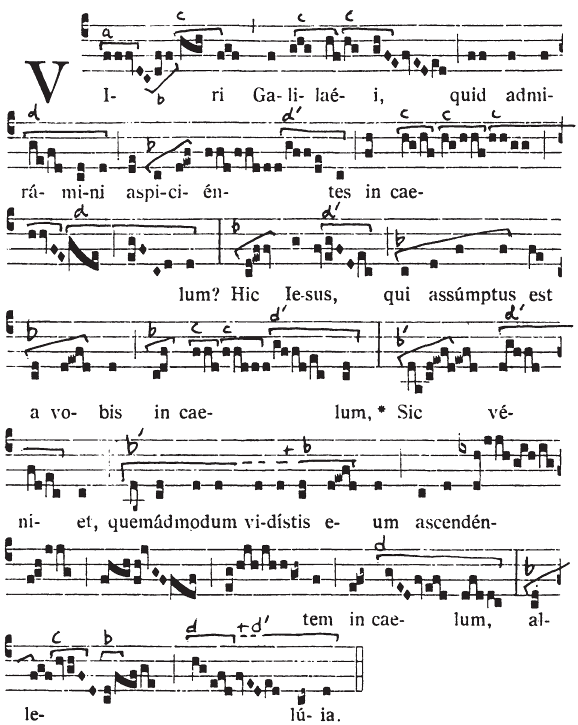
70 *Acts*, 1:9–11, in the Vulgate and Challoner-Rheims versions.

vobis in caelum, sic veni	heaven, shall so come, as you
et quemadmodum vidistis	have seen him going into
eum euntem in caelum.	heaven.

The liturgical text varies significantly from the Vulgate: in place of "quid statis aspicientes" it has "quid admiramini aspicientes," and in place of "euntem" it has "ascendentem." While both of these variants have precedents in ancient texts[71] and in the venerable introit for the Ascension, they are important here because they stand out in the musical setting of the offertory.

Example 5

Viri Galilaei with Motivic Analysis



[71] Petrus Pietschmann, O.S.B., "Die nicht dem Psalter entnommenen Messgesangstiicke auf ihre Textgestalt untersucht," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, XII (1932), pp. 87–144; cf. particularly pp. 106, 129.

Viri Galilaei is a piece whose melodic structure is generally based upon an intricate weaving together of a very few short motives. The initial intonation contains three of these; the fourth follows shortly upon it:

> a: F-F-D, a reiteration of F followed by a minor third below;
>
> b: C-D-F, an ascent of a whole step plus a minor third, reversing the direction of a; it resembles the intonation figure of mode-two psalmody, and generally carries an intoning function as the beginning of a phrase segment; the minor third is often filled in with a quilisma; a variant of it, b', adds the beginning figure D-A touching on the fourth below the final.
>
> c: a-G-a-F, the reciting tone of mode one with a lower neighboring tone figure and then a third below it.
>
> d: a cadential motive comprising two successive descending thirds,[72] always beginning with G; it may be followed by a C-D movement or may cadence upon C;
>
> > d: includes the thirds G-E-F-D.
> >
> > d': includes the thirds F-D-E-C.

It is evident from Example 5 that the chant has its own kind of internal formulae: most of the chant consists of a flexible application of these four motives, sometimes with amplification. Such amplification can be seen, for example, in the phrase "in caelum" immediately before the final alleluia; it consists of motive d (G-E-F-D), prepared by a stepwise ascent of a third, and amplified by reiterations and neighboring tone embellishments of the F-D third, completed by a cadence to C. Likewise, the concluding "alleluia" incorporates b, c, and the two forms of d, but with some amplification between them.

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[72] From the beginning of motive c the intonation has as its only skip a-F. The first occurrence of the d motive forms the beginning of an overall stepwise descent, moving to the cadence through G-E, F-D, C, to D.

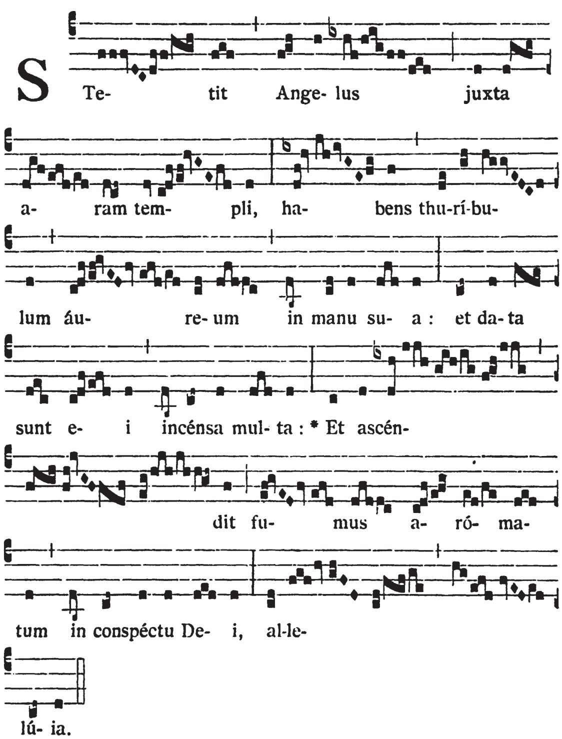
The most striking part of the chant is not based upon these motives at all: the long, word-painting melisma on “ascendentem.” At its very beginning it moves out of the range of the motives with its abrupt ascent of C-D-A-c; its structure consists of a gradual stepwise descent by thirds (a-c, G-b flat, Fa, E-g, F), but this is interrupted several times by stepwise ascents. The skeptic would say, “how can this be word-painting, since you have admitted that there is also descent?” appealing to the principle, what goes up must also come down.[73] The answer is evident: It is in the initial, more prominent, skipwise movements that the idea of ascent is depicted; skipwise movement attracts the attention more than stepwise. The gradual skipwise descent complements this with a logical progression and prepares for the cadence. This melisma is totally outside the context of the intricate working of motives upon which the rest of the chant is constructed; moreover, its abrupt ascent forms a vivid contrast with the low-ranging material immediately preceding it. Both of these features draw particular attention to the melisma and highlight its exceptional role in the melody.

If a departure from the motivic structure alerts the listener to a special emphasis upon the meaning of the text, then perhaps an unusual permutation of the basic motives might do this as well. The first occurrence of the words “in caelum,” is upon a melisma whose length is exceeded only by that on “ascendentem.” Does this melisma draw attention to the setting of the word for heaven? While it does reiterate the highest note thus reached so far, that would hardly be sufficient. Rather it is a very different kind of depiction; its text, setting heaven as the object, depicts an action, “admiramini aspicientes,” looking up into the heavens in a state of bewildered wonder. The permutation of the motives suggests this: motive c is repeated twice, each time with additional reiteration of notes, suggesting progressive hesitation; then motive d is altered to include two descents of a fourth and a preponderance of skips. This is a slightly illogical version of the cadence (motive

[73] Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, pp. 302f.; Apel, *Gregorian Chant*, pp. 303f.

d) that could be described as a solecism.[74] The more logical form of the same cadence comes immediately following on "Hic Jesus," providing the implicit answer to the question expressed by a more normal form of the cadence. The sense of incompleteness in this unusual cadence might simply be the expression of the question; yet together with the extended reiterations of the previous motive, the total effect is a slight suspension of the cogency of the passage, as if to depict bewilderment.

Example 6
Stetit Angelus



[74] In the version of the Montpellier Codex it is yet a little bit more disoriented: G D F E G F C D. *Antiphonarium tonale missarum, XIe siècle: Codex H. 159 de la Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de médecine de Montpellier, in Paléographie musical*, VIII.

Stetit Angelus is a text found in older repertories, Milanese and Mozarabic, though in a version closer to the Vulgate and on different liturgical occasions; its melody, however, seems to be unique to the Gregorian (Frankish) repertory.[75] It begins with the same intonation as *Viri Galilaei*; it uses exactly the same word-painting melisma on "Et ascendit," and the same melody for the concluding "alleluia;" overall, its motivic material is similar, yet its construction is quite different. Rather than being a series of statements using a finely varied sequence of motives, its phrases are more differentiated one from the other, and fall into longer phrase units. The following summarizes some of these differences:

> "Angelus": the b-flat gives this word a higher range than "Galilaei" had, differentiating it from the preceding material.
>
> 'Juxta": the repeated leap up to G gives a prominent upper turning point, strong enough to establish an overall stepwise descent between the prominent pitches on "Angelus" (a) and "templi (F)."
>
> "templi": the rise to a bridges motives b and d, forming together a larger arch-shaped phrase.
>
> "habens" anticipates the range and important pitches of the "et ascendit" melisma.
>
> "thuribulum" has a range which mediates between "habens" and "aureum," its prominent a-G helps to form an overall stepwise descent between the b-flat of "habens" and the F of "aureum."
>
> "in manu sua" uses b', with its touching upon the fourth below the final; the sequence of the previous three phrases (beginning "habens") and this one forms a single melodic trajectory, each playing a differentiated and functional role in the overall shape. b' is preceded by some version of b each time it occurs, so that

(Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1901–1905; reprint, Berne: Herbert Lang, 1972), p. 211.

[75] Levy, "Toledo, Rome, and the Legacy of Gaul," pp. 74–77.

this motive, as well, contributes to broaden a melodic contour.

The overall construction of phrases is thus more organic than in *Viri Galilaei*, its underpinning being a clearer sequence of stepwise descent in prominent main notes; the sweep of the melody is thus broader and the total effect more dramatic.

What of the material which is common to both chants (the melodies on "et ascendit" and "alleluia")? In view of the stylistic difference just identified, it is apparent that the common material has a much greater affinity with the stylistic process of *Stetit* than that of *Viri*. Particularly the "et ascendit" melisma shows a stepwise coherence not seen elsewhere in *Viri* but characteristic of *Stetit*.

The identity of the word-painting melisma in both chants suggests that it might have been the reason the melody was chosen for this text, since the melisma could set essentially the same idea. Yet once the two pieces are compared, there is another aspect of *Stetit Angelus* that suggests that the melisma might be more suitable to it. The difference between the setting of the idea of ascent in *Ascendit Deus* and *Viri Galilaei* is that in the former the ascent is direct and immediate, while in the latter it is intermittent. This very quality may depict better the ascent of incense than that of the Lord, reflecting as it does the unpredictable billowing of clouds of smoke. Yet there is a counterargument: the context in the *Acts of the Apostles* for *Viri Galilaei* is "he was raised up and a cloud received him out of their sight."[76] A cloud hiding the Lord could be as billowing as one of smoke. It is thus inconclusive which text this melisma suits better, and the relation of the two pieces must be addressed on other grounds.[77]

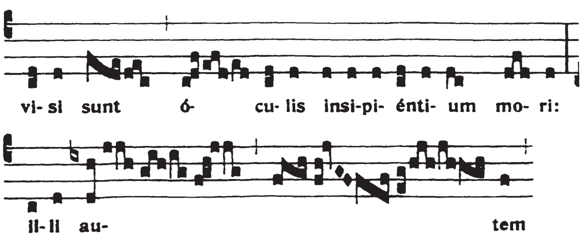
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[76] *Acts*, 1:9.

[77] This is the subject of a further study; this complex of pieces shows the kind of interrelations explored by Kenneth Levy in "On Gregorian Orality," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XLIII (1990), pp. 185–227; my hypothesis is that there was a continuing interrelation between versions of these two pieces, the result being that the melisma from *Stetit* finally replaced whatever had been in *Viri*, and that *Viri* is already the adaptation of a melody from another older piece.

Justorum animae is in most respects a *contrafactum of Stetit Angelus*; that is, it is a note-for-note setting of the new text to the already-existing melody. The sole point of interest in this piece is the treatment of the melisma together with what comes immediately before it.

EXAMPLE 7
Justorum animae, "Visi sunt"



The text reads "they seem to the eyes of the unknowing to be dead; they are, however, in peace."[78] The crux of the text is the juxtaposition of appearances contrary to fact, which are negative—they seem to be dead—with the fundamental reality which is positive—they are in peace. The word "autem" (however) expresses this paradox, and moreover expresses the fact that it is cause for rejoicing by being set to the melisma which formerly set "et ascendit." Thus the melisma, which in the previous examples served the purpose of word-painting, is now applied to a more general kind of expression—both the contrast in the text and a human state of mind in response to it. There is, however, another detail which comes closer to word-painting, in the phrase previous to "autem" on the words "insipientium mori." The corresponding phrase in *Stetit Angelus* used the motive b', which touched upon the fourth below the final, but here this very purposeful descent has been avoided, the word "insipientium" itself comprising only a second. This highlights the contrast inherent in the text, but it is also a kind of word-painting: this melodic passage has lost all its contour and interest, and by this fact eloquently

[78] *Wisdom*, 3:1–3.

expresses "unknowing." Though the piece is a contrafactum, and though the principal expressive melisma remains unaltered, a simple restriction has been placed upon the melody, creating an even greater contrast; because of this contrast the melisma on "autem" more effectively expresses the positive actual state of the souls. Thus slight aberrations in the setting of this melody aptly express the text, even though the rest of the melody is kept quite literally.

Erue, Domine is another contrafactum of *Stetit Angelus*, altered only to accommodate slightly different configurations of syllables. Even here, the melody may have been selected for this text because of the fundamental contrast between the melisma and what comes before it. The text is on a subject similar to that of *Justorum animae*, the dead who will not give praise, contrasted with those whose sins are forgiven them, and this recall may have suggested the adaptation of this melody. It is divided in content into two parts; the first part consists of prayers for the dead in the form of imperatives, "Rescue, O Lord, their souls from death, and cast out from your glance their sins." The second part gives a complementary argument, "for the underworld will not confess thee, nor will the dead praise thee." The melody at this phrase follows a convention often seen in Renaissance and Baroque word-painting: a negative statement is set to the idea which is its opposite, here something like the heavens will confess thee and the living will give thee praise. The setting of "non infernus" then, could be an expression of joy in that fashion. Two parts of the text in fundamental contrast are clearly set as opposites, and the familiar juxtaposition of motive b' with the rising melisma is the crux of that contrast. It must be admitted that this manner of text expression is not even as specific as that of *Justorum animae*, and it could not in any event be called word-painting.

The final piece of the set is *Tu es Petrus*. Its text is the famous Petrine commission:

> Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam; et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam: et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum.

> Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven.[79]

[79] *Matt.* 16:18.

The piece begins as a contrafactum of *Stetit Angelus*; but from "et porta inferi" it ceases to be a contrafactum picking up some motives from *Viri Galilaei* and completely avoiding the word-painting melisma. It could well have used the melisma as in *Erue*, setting the ideas of the gates of hell to the low-ranging material and the keys of heaven to the melisma. This would have represented a significant contrast in the text, and even might have seemed an application of a spatial analogy to that contrast albeit a rather mechanical one. Instead, the total absence of the word-painting melisma in a piece which began as a contrafactum strongly suggests a negative choice—the absence of the word-painting melisma represents an absence of any real word-painting potential in the text for the redactor of the piece. The second half of the piece reverts to a style much closer to *Viri Galilaei* than to *Stetit Angelus*, ending with a strange long melisma on the last word.

Each of the five pieces has a particular relationship to the characteristic melisma, allowing it to present the most evident kind of word-painting, a more general expression of elation, or a generalized kind of contrast, or even avoiding it in the absence of a clear opportunity for representing the text literally.

Finally, to stretch the concept of formula to its limit, the context of a whole genre can be used to set exceptional passages in relief. The long melisma of the offertory *Jubilate Deo universa terra*,[80] which has been the subject of some previous discussion,[81] may be compared to the melismata of other offertories to see just how exceptional it is. An examination of the offertory responsories in Ott's collection[82] shows that while a long melisma occasionally occurs on a final word or phrase of a piece, such an occurrence elsewhere in the responsory is rare. Specifically, of the 110 offertories, only seven have a melisma of more than 30 notes that is not on the terminal word or phrase. Five of these belong to the *Viri Galilaei* group discussed above (each has the same melisma of

80 *GT*, pp. 227f.; *LU*, pp. 486f.

81 Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, pp. 292–294; Bailey, pp. 4f.

82 *OT*.

38 notes). Another is the present *Jubilate Deo Universa Terra* (for the Second Sunday after Epiphany), with a melisma of 48 notes on the unusual textual repetition of the word 'jubilate." Finally, the longest melisma, 68 notes, occurs remarkably on yet another 'Jubilate," on a similar textual repetition in the offertory for the First Sunday after Epiphany, *Jubilate Deo omnis terra*.[83] The occurrence of the two longest non-terminal melismata in the whole offertory repertory is witness to the exceptional character of these two pieces. That these melismata occur on the same word in an identical position is strong grounds for inferring that the melismata are expressions of the text. Moreover, what they represent can be seen as something quite literal; the word 'jubilate" means sing joyfully, sing with nearly wordless 'jubilation,"[84] perfectly and literally expressed by a long melisma.

This set of pieces confirms another observation made above; these two pieces show remarkable melismata in the Gregorian repertory; the same pieces in the Old Roman repertory, on the other hand, have very much less melisma on this word.[85] As in the case of *Ascendit Deus*, the absence of the word-painting element in the Old Roman version suggests the distinct possibility that it was developed after the transmission of the repertory to the North, and is a characteristic of the Gregorian, as opposed to the Roman, style.

If the forgoing study has identified one convincing instance of word-painting, then the demonstration has been accomplished—word-painting—is possible in chant. The nature of the demonstration may seem somewhat circumstantial: it relies upon permutations in a context of formulaic practice for indications of what may be significant passages, and upon simple analysis of those passages for musical analogues to textual phenomena. The

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[83] *GT*, pp. 259f., *LU*, p. 480.

[84] Cf. Walter Wiora, 'Jubilare sine verbis," *In Memoriam Jacques Handschin*, ed. H. Angles, et al. (Strassburg, Heitz, 1962), pp. 39–65.

[85] *Die Gesänge*, pp. 298ff. and 363f; *Jubilate Deo universa terra* has a melisma of 26 notes upon a repetition of the text, but *Jubilate Deo omnis terra* has no repetition of text at all.

demonstration must be so because of the limited role such expressions of text played in chant; word-painting is far from normative.

The role of word-painting in this repertory should not be confused with its role in such a repertory as the Italian madrigal. Stevens points to a significant reason for the difference. In Gregorian chant, text and music "are not to be seen as concerned with each other in a mutual self-regard but as combining together for external purposes: here the purpose of worship."[86] Thus the very self-conscious character of the Italian madrigal provides a context in which explicit text expression can play a much more central part than in chant. The greater importance of the grammatical aspects of chant structure is a direct corollary of this difference—the setting forth of a text in distinct, highly differentiated styles dependent upon liturgical function is served well by this grammatical construction. Yet it is not contradicted by the exceptional instances in which word-painting embellishes the basic process.

One might have hoped to find in the writings of medieval theorists some acknowledgement of this aspect of text-setting, but the typical medieval writer's penchant for pursuing the well-established conventional topics may well have prevented that, the principal topic for chant being that of modality. The fact remains that, although a systematic search of theoretical texts has not been undertaken, at this point there is no known discussion of such a topic in medieval theorists.

There is, however, another aspect of medieval religious culture which can give a further context to the interpretation of their melodies, and that is the exegesis of scripture. A long patristic tradition gave the Middle Ages a highly developed way of reading a text, one in which a text was read not only for its literal sense, but also for three different allegorical senses. The basic literal sense was to be used in the proof of doctrine; the allegorical senses did not contradict the literal, but added other dimensions to the text, whether prophetic, moral, or eschatological.[87] Thus, for the

[86] Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 271.

[87] Cf. Joseph Dyer, "The Singing of Psalms in the Early-Medieval Office," *Speculum*, LXIV (1989), pp. 535–578; cf. pp. 535–538 and the literature cited there.

medieval singer of chant, differing contexts might give a text very different shades of meaning. This is in perfect harmony, then, with the practice of representing an aspect of a text vividly in one setting and not doing so in another. It must be admitted, in addition, that various stages of history must have seen the matters addressed in this paper quite differently. This is suggested, for example, by the fact that the liquescent notes in *Passer invenit* disappear in some of its later versions.

There is, then, in the interpretation of text-music relations in Gregorian chant, a middle ground between the extremes of freely imaginative associations and the irate empiricism of Willi Apel. It is not restricted to the sound of the text as Stevens would have it; rather, on the basis of at least a few clear instances of the depiction of motion or spatial representation as embellishments, it admits of what is properly called word-painting, and points to a much wider range of more general text expression. Nevertheless, these exceptional instances of word-painting do not pertain to the fundamental structure of the music so much as they add to it a delight in vivid description.

12

AN UNUSUAL CHAIN OF THIRDS: THE INTROIT *MISERERE MIHI, DOMINE*

The chain of thirds is a phenomenon of the basic Gregorian repertory—that body of the Propers of the Mass found in the earliest manuscripts with musical notation.[1] Although no medieval theorist identifies this principle, it is quite clearly observable in the pieces themselves. It consists of a series of strong notes around which the melodies center, conjunct thirds, D-F-a-c-e, with A-C below, as illustrated in example 1.[2] The intervening pitches have relatively weak to strong status, with b being the weakest, then E; G and D then are of intermediate strength. It has a strong affinity with melodies in a pentatonic scales, since such scales consist of the strong and intermediate notes described here. This phenomenon was first described by

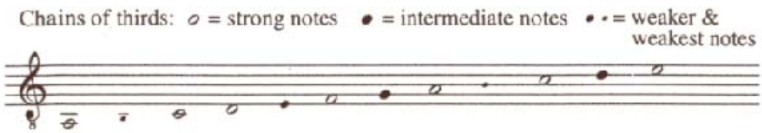
This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 136, no. 2 (2009).

[1] This is the repertory that appears in the *Graduale Triplex* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1979) in the pieces which appear with staffless neumes in addition to the square notation.

[2] The diagram is drawn from William Peter Mahrt "Gamut, Solmization, and Modes," in: *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, ed. Ross W. Duffin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 482–495, at 487. Pitches are indicated using Guidonian letter notation: upper-case "A" at the bottom of the bass clef to "G"; lower-case "a" just below middle "c" to "g" above it.

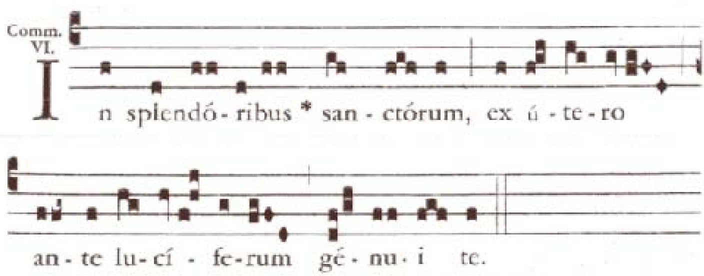
Curt Sachs[3] for a wide range of melodies, including Gregorian chant, other medieval melodies, and non-Western melodies. Sachs also described the use of "dovetailed" chains of thirds, the basic chain intermixed with an alternate chain, C-E-G-b.

EXAMPLE 1



The strong notes of the chain of thirds are the framework of the melodic action of most chants, with the weak notes falling in the position of passing or neighboring notes to those of the chain. This is especially apparent in chants whose finals are themselves strong notes: D and F. The communion for the Midnight Mass of Christmas, *In splendoribus sanctorum* (example 2), is a good illustration:

EXAMPLE 2



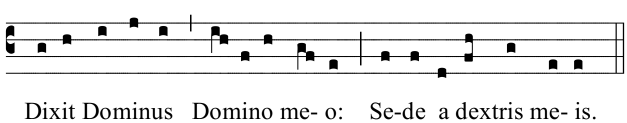
[3] Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World: East and West* (New York: Norton, 1943), pp. 297, 300–303, and Sachs, *The Wellsprings of Music*, ed. Jaap Kunst (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 145–158.

- the first phrase begins with oscillation between F and D and then adds an upper neighboring note, G, to the F;
- the second phrase adds the next higher strong note, a, with passing notes between the a and the F;
- the third and central phrase rises from the F through two notes of the chain F-a-c on the principal accented syllable "ci" forming the peak of the melody, and then descends to the F and D below;
- the fourth moves back from the D to the F, reversing the motion F to D with which the piece began.

This piece is, of course, not quite typical; its disarming simplicity relates to the stillness of the middle of the night on the longest nights of the year and the unpretentious but wondrous context of the birth of the Child. Yet the piece serves to present in the simplest form the chain of thirds in a piece whose final is a strong note.

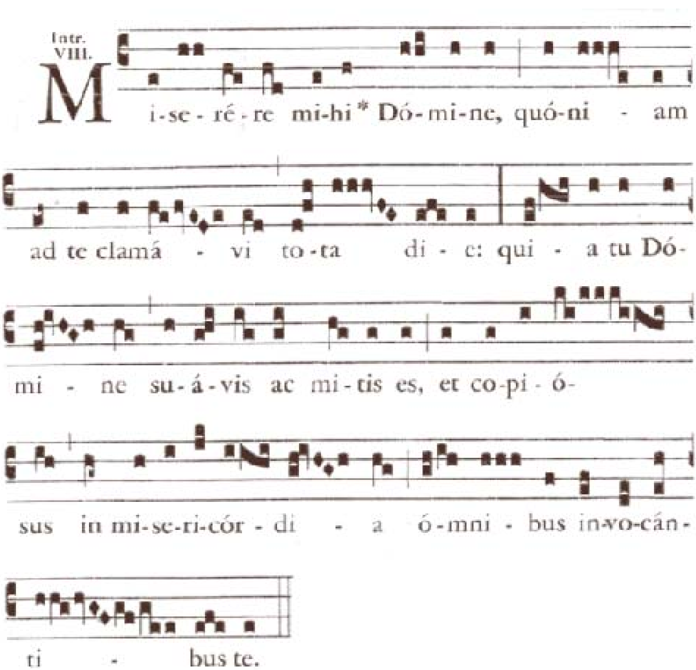
In chants whose finals are not the strong notes of the chain, that is, E and G, the process of the melody is an intermixture of thirds based upon the final and of the thirds of the chain, a dovetailing of two distinct chains, in Sachs's terms. This can be seen in the simple psalm antiphon for Psalm 109, *Dixit Dominus* (example 3). This chant begins with notes, b-d, that form thirds with the final, G. It then moves through thirds downward stepwise, c-a, b-G, and finally F-a, which is extended to a full triad, F-a-c, before settling on G. There is thus a shifting between thirds based on the strong notes and those based on the final, with a stronger emphasis upon the strong notes (F-a-c) just before the final (G). This is a very characteristic pattern for pieces in modes seven and eight, on the G final.

EXAMPLE 3



Miserere mihi, Domine (example 4)[4] is an instance of an extended use of an alternate chain of thirds for the purpose of an eloquent representation of the text. This mode-eight introit follows a pattern of thirds typical of its mode, fluctuating between the G final, the c reciting tone, and the strong notes F-a-c leading to the reciting tone. Particularly on "quoniam ad te clamavi tota die" (for I have cried to thee all the day), the pitches focus upon the lowest notes of the range, suggesting the supplicant posture of the speaker. The following segment "quia tu Domine" (for thou, O Lord), bears more mode-eight intonation to the reciting note, rising a little higher, focusing upon the Lord. After its cadence to

EXAMPLE 4



[4] Ps. 85:3–5; Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time in the ordinary form; Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost in the extraordinary form.

b, it shifts to an extended passage in the b-d third on "suavis et mitis es" (thou art sweet and mild). This striking emphasis upon an alternate third, one might suspect, serves to set off in an affective way these sensitive adjectives. This is confirmed by what follows: on "et copiosus in misericordia" (and abundant in mercy) the b-d third is extended to d-f, outlining a diminished fifth, through this whole text. Thus the distinctive sound of that alternate chain is amplified by the unusual diminished fifth, and the word "copiosus" (abundant) is represented by a part of the melody that rises higher than the conventional limit of the mode, emphasizing it by the reiteration of notes on its highest pitch and extending it through the subsequent text "in misericordia," before it returns to the c reciting note and descends to G. The exceptional chain of thirds is an extension of thirds from the final, but remains exceptional because the prevailing pattern for this mode is the main chain; moreover, by exceeding the regular range of the mode it quite appropriately represents "abundance." Such vivid and explicit representation of the text is not common in Gregorian chant, but neither is it non-existent, as some would contend;[5] rather, its infrequent occurrences are moments of eloquence and add to the beauty of the individual piece and even of the whole repertory.

[5] See William Peter Mahrt, "Word-Painting and Formulaic Chant," pp. 185–216, above.

13

REFLECTIONS ON KYRIE *ORBIS FACTOR*

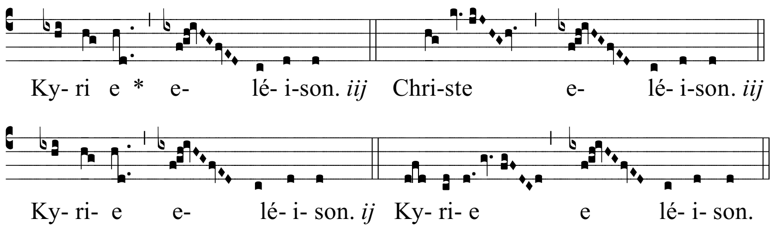
In encouraging the participation of the entire congregation in the music of the liturgy, there is an important principle: "singing means singing the Mass, not just singing during Mass."[1] The participation of the people is all the more authentic when they are singing the central and essential parts of the liturgy. This applies particularly to the Ordinary of the Mass, for two principal reasons. First of all, the people's parts of the Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei) are generally liturgical actions in and of themselves, and not the accompaniment of another action.

While an introit may be a significant text, its place in the liturgical action is as an accompaniment to the procession; the procession is the action, not the introit chant. The opposite is true of the parts of the Ordinary: the Kyrie is the liturgical action and not the accompaniment of any other action; it is what is being done at the time. Thus, it is appropriate for the congregation as a whole to sing

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[1] International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 1299, R4.



this part. Second, since the parts of the Ordinary are unchangeable, they can be repeated often, learned well, and thus sung without difficulty by a congregation.

This also means that these pieces for the congregation need not be limited to the simplest chants. The Kyrie from Mass VIII (de Angelis), not a particularly simple chant, can usually be sung by an average Catholic congregation, since is has been sung so often and remains in the collective memories of innumerable congregations.

But there is another Gregorian Kyrie than deserves attention in this context: Kyrie Orbis factor, from Mass XI, for the ordinary Sundays of the year. This is a chant of modest scope, easily learned by a congregation, but of considerable beauty—an important feature of an often-repeated chant. I have sung this chant many Sundays a year for over forty years, and it has retained all its freshness and depth over this repetition. I will try to explain some of the aspects of its beauty and practicality in the hope that many will want to incorporate it into the singing of their Sunday congregations.

In approaching the beauty of a chant, one can address concrete elements of symbolism as well as abstract elements of melodic design. Kyrie melodies have a characteristic melodic contour, which reflects something of the meaning of their texts. The characteristic contour of Gregorian chants in general is the arch,[2]

[2] Cf. Peter Wagner, *Gregorianische Formenlehre: Eine choralische Stilkunde*, Einführung in die Gregorianischen Melodien: Ein Handbuch der Choralwissenschaft, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), pp. 9, 286.

beginning upon or near its lowest pitch, rising to a peak and then descending back down to its final. This reflects the basic aspect of prayer, rising in aspiration to a high point and returning to the point of origin.

Kyrie melodies very often show a slightly different contour—beginning at a higher pitch and descending to a low point, a gesture of humility suitable to such a plea for mercy. The initial invocation of *Kyrie Orbis factor* has this kind of contour—from its beginning note, it touches upon the half-step above, the half-step being a particularly expressive interval; then turning around the initial note, it skips downward a fifth to the final; this is followed by an ascent upward to the top note of the half-step interval and a filling out of the whole range of the fifth back down to the final, touching upon the note below it. Thus "eleison" confirms and amplifies the initial pitches of the invocation. The turn to Christ at "Christe" moves to a higher pitch, expressing a more intense address of the Son of God.

The seventh and eighth invocations return to the melody of the first, but the final one focuses upon the lowest part of the range; the contrast with the higher range of the previous lines conveys a sense of equanimity and repose that gives the chant a pleasing rounded-out quality. These matters of contour are unusual in Gregorian chants, but quite characteristic of Kyrie chants; and their effect, though subliminal, surely contributes to the quality of the plea for mercy on the part of the congregation.

The other aspect of the beauty of such a chant is that of melodic design. This chant received its final formulation only in the fourteenth century,[3] and its melodic structure is more rationalized than some of the earlier melodies. The basis of its structure is the pair of intervals, the fifth and the fourth: the octave of the authentic Dorian mode comprises a fifth D-A and a fourth above it A-D, with a single note (C) below it. The first Kyrie is based

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[3] Two versions of this melody are given in the chant books, one from the tenth century and one from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1962), pp. 46, 85; *Graduale Romanum* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1974), p. 748; *Gregorian Missal* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1990), p. 113.

upon the fifth, with a half-step above it; the response "eleison" begins at the mid-point of the fifth (F), rises to the top, adding the half-step above, then descends stepwise to the bottom of the fifth, adding a note below it; the fifth is thus bordered by a single pitch at its top and bottom. The Christe adds the fourth above (A-D), but its principal notes are A-C, with neighboring notes above and below this third, complemented then by "eleison," the same melody as before.

The final invocation is based upon the lower portion of the range, being centered upon the third, D-F, with a neighboring note above and below it, just as in the Christe. In fact, the final Kyrie repeats a good bit of the Christe melody down a fifth: Christe: D-C-D-C-A-G-A; final Kyrie: G-F-G-F-D-C-D. The three melodies are clearly distinguished in range by being centered on first the fifth, then the fourth above, and then the minor third at the bottom of the fifth, and emphasis upon these main notes is created by adding neighboring notes around them.

There is something surprisingly symmetrical to this melody. If one counts notes, one sees it: Kyrie (6 notes) eleison (12 notes); Christe (9 notes) eleison (12 notes); final Kyrie (13 notes), eleison (12 notes). Thus, in the first invocations, a proportion of one to two, in the second, three to four, and in the last, one integer over one to one (a superparticular proportion, in medieval terms). Of course, one does not have to count the notes to appreciate the proportionality involved. There is an interesting point in the early history of the Kyrie that bears its traces in this melody. In the oldest *Ordines Romani*, ceremonial books for the early Roman liturgy, the performance of the Kyrie is described in some detail. It was what has been called a Latin-texted Kyrie, since the initial word Kyrie is replaced by a Latin phrase that amplifies "Kyrie," Lord. In this piece the first line was "Orbis factor, Rex æterne," maker of the world, eternal King. This was sung by deacons, and the choir responded with "eleison," have mercy. There would be an unspecified number of invocations, but at the end the master of ceremonies would give a sign to conclude; the deacons would then sing the last invocation to a different melody, indicating that this was the final one. Our Kyrie melody shows these characteristics: while the invocations differ in melody, the response, "eleison" is always the same; and the last invocation is notably different from the foregoing ones.

The Kyrie, as sung in the Carolingian period and later, consisted specifically of nine invocations, three times three, symbolic of the Trinity, and usage until the reform of the Second Vatican Council retained this "nine-fold" arrangement. In books after the council the Kyrie is six-fold, but the rubrics allow the nine-fold for musical reasons. I find that three invocations are just enough to give a congregation not familiar with the melody a chance to pick it up by the third statement. Thus, for the sake of the congregation's participation, the nine-fold arrangement may be used advantageously. Moreover, the reduction to a six-fold arrangement was to accommodate the dialogue between priest and congregation, each stating the invocation once; this six-fold arrangement seems to have been devised for the low Mass and need not be retained in the high Mass.

Sometimes the phenomena of the Middle Ages are instructive in thinking about how to perform a chant. Chants were performed in the earlier Middle Ages without the aid of musical notation, being passed on intact by oral tradition long before they were written down, and scholars have often reflected upon the phenomenon of oral transmission as a factor in the nature of the chants. It is possible, even with a group of singers today, to replicate this oral transmission: A certain segment of the chant is sung to the group and they are asked to sing it back identically; eight or ten notes can be retained in the short-term memory and easily sung back. Then the next segment is sung to them and they repeat it, then these two together. Since the portion of the melody on "eleison" is the same for each invocation, it does not have to be relearned. In quite a short time, the whole melody can be sung by a large group totally without the aid of any notation.

In my experience, this is faster than simply having the group read the piece from the notation, because they can pick up the rhythmic inflection of the chant immediately. Still, the notation ought to be a useful aid as well, and I have found that one can ask a group to look at the notation as the piece is lined out and sung by imitation, just as I have described above, and they learn it all the quicker. If one is allowed a brief rehearsal time before Mass, this can be done with a congregation very efficiently. I would not do it often, but on occasion it is a very effective way to introduce a piece to be sung in that morning's Mass.

This is thus a chant with interesting symmetries and melodic design; together with the symbolism of its descending motion, these features contribute to a piece that will bear considerable repetition and retain its uniqueness, freshness, and beauty over a long period of time.

14

CAN KYRIE *LUX ET ORIGO* AND KYRIE *TE CHRISTE REX SUPPLICES* BE SUNG BY THE CONGREGATION?

The restoration of the Propers of the Mass, ideally sung to full Gregorian melodies, requires the singing of a skilled choir. This, in turn, presumes that the Ordinary of the Mass usually be sung by the congregation, again, ideally in Gregorian chant. But what ordinaries can a congregation actually sing well? The presumption has been that it must be principally the simplest melodies. The booklet *Jubilate Deo* in fact proposed such a simple set (Kyrie XVI, Gloria VIII, Credo III, Sanctus XVIII, and Agnus Dei XVIII),[1] and it is perhaps wise, in beginning to sing chant with a congregation, to sing some of the simplest settings.

Are there other chants of the ordinary which might be sung by a congregation? It is an observable fact, that Catholic congregations can sing Mass VIII (Missa *de Angelis*) quite well, and, with the possible exception of the Gloria, these are not among the simplest

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[1] For an introduction to *Jubilate Deo* together with links to both musical notation and performances on MP3s, see Adoremus <http://www.adoremus.org/JubilateDeo.html>; for a printable version of the booklet, see the Web Site of the St. Cecilia Schola Cantorum <http://www.ceciliaschola.org/notes/jubilatedeo.html>

settings; the Kyrie is the most elaborate; in the abstract, one might judge it too difficult for a congregation, but they do it well. With experience, congregations are able to sing the basic ordinaries that are not the simplest chants.[2] These somewhat more elaborate chants balance better the developed style of the Gregorian propers, and they value the congregation by giving them something more substantial to sing. They can be sung well by the congregation because some people learned them in school, but also because the consistent text of the ordinary allows them to be sung several weeks in succession, thus learning by repetition. My purpose here is to discuss two related chants, the comparison of which suggests that one can be learned by a congregation, and the other is more likely a choir chant. Kyrie *Lux et origo*,[3] I would propose, is in a style a congregation could master; Kyrie *Te Christe rex supplices*[4] shows clear melodic relations to *Lux et origo*, yet has a considerably more elaborate melodic style and wider range, out of the reach of most congregations.

Kyrie *Lux et origo* follows the pattern of many Kyrie melodies: traditionally three Kyries on the same melody, three Christes on another melody, and three Kyries on a third melody, the last one of which is varied slightly, thus, AAA BBB CCC'[5] It's modal

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[2] My congregation sings over the course of the year Masses I, IV, parts of VIII, IX, XI, XVII, and XVIII.

[3] Mass I, for the Easter Season, *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1961), p. 16; *Gregorian Missal* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1990), p. 75.

[4] Kyrie "ad libitum" VI, *Liber*, p. 83; Kyrie IA for Sundays in the Easter Season, *Gregorian Missal*, pp. 75–76.

[5] Alternatively, the first melody is repeated in the last three invocations: AAA BBB AAA' or the more complex nine-fold arrangement is used, as in such pieces as Kyrie IX (see below). Traditionally the Kyrie was nine-fold; the rite of 1970 calls for a six-fold Kyrie, two invocations each, but allows for a nine-fold performance for musical reasons. The six-fold arrangement, two invocations each, suits the Low Mass, in which the priest says each invocation and the congregation responds; it is thus more symmetrical than dividing a nine-fold arrangement in direct alternation of priest and people. For congregational singing, however, I always recommend a nine-fold performance, since in learning a new chant, I notice that upon the third invocation. the congregation sings the

structure is, however somewhat unusual and quite beautiful. The first Kyrie is in mode three, whose final is E and whose intonation formula is G-a-c,[6] rising to the reciting note c; it begins with the typical intonation figure but does not touch upon the final until its last note (not an unusual occurrence in mode three), making that arrival a pleasant surprise upon first hearing. Mode three shares the same intonation figure and reciting note with mode eight, which, however, has G as a final. Thus the Christe centers upon the reciting note c, touches upon the E below, but then rises to a final on G. Until the final two notes, the listener continues to hear the Christe in mode three and then is surprised to hear the final shift to G; this new final then suggests that in retrospect the whole Christe has been in mode eight. The final Kyrie rises to d, the reciting note of mode seven and then cadences to G, thus a subtle shift from the plagal to the authentic G-mode. There has thus been a gradual rise in pitch focus through the course of the nine invocations, something quite suitable to the Easter Season, to which the chant is assigned.[7]

Kyrie *Te Christe rex supplices* has a similar modal arrangement, but its scheme of repetition is more elaborate and varied. Like Kyrie IX (*Cum jubilo*), the succession of invocations varies thus: A–B–A | C–D–C | E–F–EEF', the ninth invocation being a culminating redoubling of the previous two. Kyrie *Te Christe* incorporates some parts of the melody of Kyrie *Lux et origo*. The first Kyrie (and the third) of *Te Christe* is an elaboration of *Lux et origo*. The beginning intonation figure G–a–c is filled in: G–a–b–c; thereafter the melody is an expansion and amplification of that of *Lux*:

Lux:	Gac	a acbG			aGF G G E
Te Christe:	Gabc	ba abcbbG	aGE FEDE	|	GacaGF G G E

melody most confidently. A nine-fold arrangement may also be sung cantor–choir–congregation for each group of three invocations.

[6] I use the Guidonian system of designating the notes of the scale: A–G entirely below middle C, a–g surrounding middle C, and aa–ee entirely above middle C.

[7] This rise in pitch focus is continued in Gloria I; on Easter Sunday it begins with the introit and continues through the Alleluia.

The first and third Christe of *Te Christe* are almost identical with the Christe of *Lux*, "eleison" being varied slightly.

There are interesting motivic interrelations between the invocations of *Te Christe*. The first of the nine invocations begins with a neume including a quilisma, G–a–b–c, reaching a range of only a seventh; this figure is repeated as the beginning of the second Kyrie, down a fifth, C–D–E–F, thus filling out the bottom of the ambitus of mode eight.[8] Its first note, C, is the note that was lacking for the complete octave in the previous invocation. The final three Kyries begin with that same figure now transposed up a fifth: d–e–f–g, filling out the entire octave of the authentic ambitus; that figure is a significant part of the reduplication in the final invocation. Kyrie *Te Christe* thus has a much more dramatic, even flamboyant, melodic shape; each trio of invocations includes a striking contrast of ambitus, the middle invocation being in a contrasting lower range. No single invocation except the final one reaches the range of an octave. The final invocation forms a climax, redoubling the initial figure and adding one that varies the middle invocation.

The use of some common material allows a clear view of the differences of the two melodies. Kyrie *Te Christe* with its total range of a twelfth and its dramatic conclusion still keeps the same basic modal structure and progressively rising ambitus. In comparison with *Te Christe*, Kyrie *Lux et origo* is much more discreet, with melodies of modest ambitus and neumatic elaboration.

As might be expected, the dissemination of these chants in the Middle Ages differs considerably. Melnicki's index of Kyrie melodies lists 218 manuscripts for *Lux et origo*, and only 61 for Te Christe.[9] One might assume that the simpler melody is the earliest,[10] but manuscript evidence does not support that. The earliest

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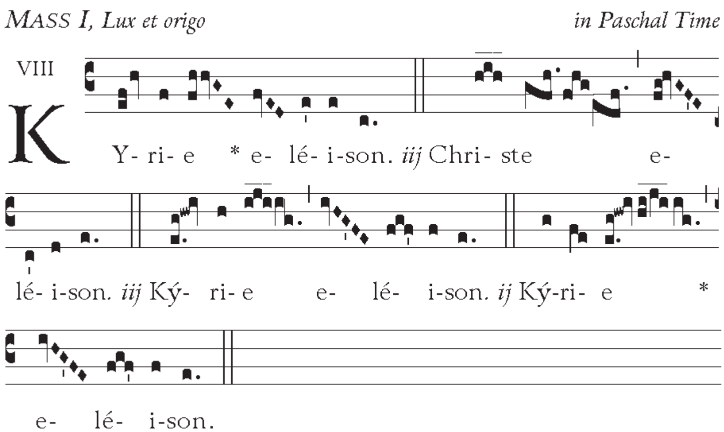
[8] The defined ambitus of mode eight is the octave D–d (with a possible additional note above), but often this mode outlines the octave below the reciting note: C–c, as here.

[9] Margareta Melnicki, *Das Einstimmige Kyrie der lateinischen Mittelalters*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Erlangen, 1954, melodies 39 and 55.

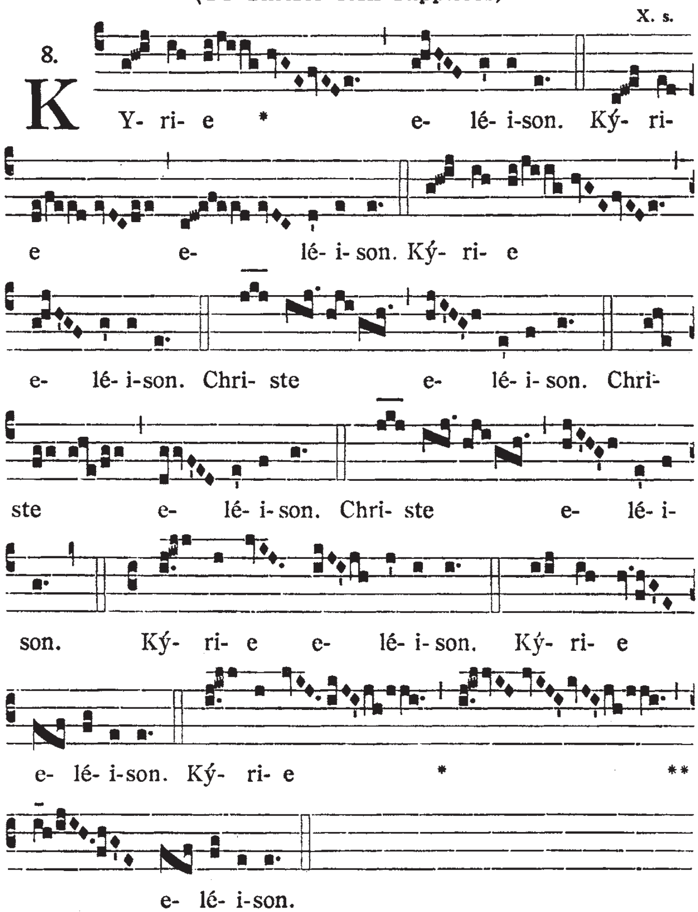
[10] This seems to be the case with Kyries IX (*Cum jubilo*) X (Alme Pater). The former is the more elaborate; the latter, simpler one shows sources a century earlier.

source in Melnicki's index is for *Te Christe*, from the tenth century, while the earliest for *Lux* is the eleventh. This is far from conclusive, however; these melodies probably circulated widely in oral transmission before they were written down. The melodies of the ordinary were most likely sung in oral transmission longer than those of the proper, simply because, since they were repeated often, they were more easily retained in memory, while the propers, often being sung only once a year needed the assistance of notation earlier. The tenth-century source is a troper; the motivation for writing the tenth-century melody down was evidently the need to include the trope text.

The conclusion is quite clear: *Te Christe* is really a choir piece, while in comparison, *Lux et origo* is much more within the abilities of a congregation, certainly one which can sing the Missa *de Angelis*.



(Te Christe Rex supplices)



15

EXPECTANS EXSPECTAVI AND *MEDITABOR*: MODE-TWO OFFERTORIES WITH UNUSUAL ENDINGS



With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and he had regard to me; and he heard my prayer and he put into my mouth a new canticle, a hymn to our God. (Ps. 39: 2, 3, 4; offertory, 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, *olim* Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost)



I will meditate on thy commandments, which I have loved exceedingly: and I will lift up my hands to thy commandments, which I have loved. (Ps. 118: 47, 48; offertory, Second Sunday in Lent, 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time; *olim* Second Sunday in Lent; with alleluia: Tuesday and Friday in the Seventh Week of Easter; *olim*, Ember Wednesday after Pentecost)

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The modes of the Mass propers, especially in the most ancient repertories, are somewhat more specific than the simple scales given in the textbooks. Instead of being only an octave scale, they are also a system of important pitches which form a framework for melodic figures. Their principal tones are the final and the reciting note, and their melodic activity centers around these tones. For example, mode two, whose final is D and reciting note F, and whose melodies range both above and below the final (thus a plagal range), has melodic figures that comprise the minor third from D to F, frequently focusing upon F, as well as some which range below the final, imitating the D-to-F figures a fourth below.

The D final, however, has a certain peculiarity. Although the scale for Gregorian chant allows one accidental, B-flat, that flat occurs only in two positions: a step below middle C and an octave above that. The final of the mode, however, is a seventh below middle C, and there is no B-flat below it.[1]

Yet, there are many chants, which conform to mode two in general—they have a major second and a minor third above their final and they range both above and below it—but they require a major third below the final. This is a significant difference, since that note is the bottom of a major triad which includes the final as its middle note. To provide for this major third below the final, these chants are notated with the final up a fifth on A, the major third below falling on F. Graduals in mode two are all on A, because their principal middle cadence is on that same F. [2]

The two present chants are both noted on A, and both make prominent use of the F below towards the end of the chant, in very different ways but with both effecting a certain delightful surprise at the end. These unusual usages are all the more notable, since,

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[1] This is because the scale is constituted of hexachords (patterns of six stepwise notes: ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, with a half-step between mi and fa, i.e., G A B C D E, C D E F G a, F G a b-flat c d; the lowest hexachord begins on G an eleventh below middle C, including B natural, but there is not a hexachord on F below that, and so no B-flat there.

[2] The most notable such gradual is Haec dies, for Easter Sunday; in this piece, the very beginning of the chant touches on that low F.

as offertories, they hold to a consistent reiteration of similar formulae, here centered on the D-F interval, a feature which projects an aura of solemnity suitable to the chant which prepares for the most solemn moments of the Mass. In addition, both have unusual parallelisms in their texts, which are reflected in their melodies.

Exspectans exspectavi[3] shows the parallelism typical of the psalms: each psalm verse consists of two complete statements which are somehow complementary. Thus, the first verse: "With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and he had regard for me." The second verse, is also parallel, but its parallelism has been constructed for this chant; it excerpts portions of verses 3 and 4 of the psalm to create a parallelism similar to that of the first verse: "And he heard my prayer, and he put a new canticle into my mouth, a hymn to our God." This verse includes a direct object, "canticle," and then an appositive to it—"a hymn to our God," which extends the second half of the verse by an additional but subordinate parallelism. The precise text is not the received text of the psalms traditionally used to chant the office (the Gallican psalter), but an older text (the Roman psalter) that bears witness to a very ancient tradition behind the singing of the offertories. This manner of excerpting a scripture text is not uncommon in offertories, but more frequently found in non-psalmodic texts. Here the excerpting serves a specific musical purpose: to focus upon that appositive, the hymn to our God.

There is an additional musical element in those lines of the psalm chosen as the basis of the offertory: they show a pronounced use of assonance, the preponderance of particular vowels. The e vowel prevails in the initial two words, as well as in each clause beginning with "et" and in such phrases as "et respexit me" and "deprecationem meum." The u vowel prevails at the ends of words in "os meum canticum novum, hymnum," and then the o in "Deo nostro." These heighten the concrete sense of parallelism and emphasize the difference upon the arrival of the last object.

The melody of *Exspectans* articulates its parallelism: the beginning of each clause is set to a rise from the final to the reciting tone

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[3] *Graduale Romanum* (Sablé sur Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1974), pp. 328f.; *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée, 1962), p. 1043.

in the manner of an intonation. The second of each pair includes a complete mode-two psalm-intonation figure: thus, "exspectans" (A-C), and "et respexit" (G-A-C); then "et exaudivit" (A-C), and "et immisit" (G-A-C); the differences underline the parallelism between the two complete verses.

The initial intonation, "Expectans expectavi," is notable as an expression of its text. The repetition of the same word in a different grammatical form was noted by Cassiodorus in his commentary upon this psalm:

> We must contemplate the double use of the same word here, for this beautiful repetition is not otiose. We can expect even if we are ungrateful, but we expect with expectation only when we meekly endure something with great longing. This is the argument called *a coniugatis*, when one word related to another changes its form; *sapiens* becomes *sapienter, prudens prudenter*, and so forth.[4]

The earliest translations of the scripture held a principle of making a quite literal translation; here a Hebrew idiom, the repetition of a word as an intensification, was simply reproduced literally,[5] even though it was not quite a Latin idiom. The translator of the original Douai version held to the same principle, retaining "Expecting, I expected our Lord." Challoner's revision of the Douai, "With expectation, I waited for the Lord," eliminated the double usage of the same word without achieving any clarification in meaning. The English tradition from the time of the Coverdale's Psalter in the *Great Bible* through the King James and the Revised Standard Versions may have depended upon Cassiodorus's view, since it interpreted the quality added by the reiteration of the word as patience—"I waited patiently for the Lord." The composer of the Gregorian melody, however, seems to

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[4] Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, tr. P. G. Walsh, 3 vols., Ancient Christian Writers, 51–53 (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990), vol. 1, p. 398.

[5] Cf. W. E. Plater & H. J. White, *A Grammar of the Vulgate Being an Introduction to the Study of the Latinity of the Vulgate Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926; reprint, Oxford: Sandpiper Books, 1997), pp. 26f.

have grasped the idiom as a genuine intensification, since the repeat of the word is set to the intonation figure of mode two up a fourth; thus "exspectavi" includes the highest pitch of the piece, probably realizing the import of the original Hebrew idiom most closely. It should be noted that for some medieval musical theorists, pitches were often not described in terms of a spatial analogy—high or low—but a kinesthetic one—what we would call high and low were called "intense" and "relaxed."

The most remarkable feature of the mode of *Exspectans*, however, is its conclusion. The second half of the second verse reaches its object, "a new canticle," upon a cadence to the reciting tone, paralleling the cadence of the first verse (on "respexit me"). With this, the parallelism is fulfilled, though the final of the piece is not reached. But this is the location of the extension by parallel statement of that object by "a hymn to our God." The melody of this phrase achieves an emphasis by departing from the normal figures, just as at the beginning of the piece, this time through descent to the low F, (the reason the piece was placed on an A final), a remarkable development at the end of the piece, calling particular attention to the ultimate fruition of the intensified waiting depicted at the beginning. This alone would have been an exceptional expression of the text, but it is not all; the passage that dips down to the low F and outlines a triad F-A-C passes through a alternative triad in descent, D-B-G (in the middle of "Deo") and returns to descend through C-A-F and make its final upon the F. The mode of the piece has thus been changed in the appositive: the hymn to our God, the new canticle, is now completed in a new mode. In fact, one could speculate that the hymn to our God is the present piece—this new song, with a new configuration of the psalm text and a new conclusion to an old mode. Still, the F is not entirely new; it can now be seen to have been anticipated by the high F reached in the intensified intonation at the beginning, giving the piece a range of a complete F octave. The traditional analysis of this piece has been mode five, the authentic mode on F, as if this F ending were quite normal; that the piece proceeds in mode two for most of its course was only for the attentive to notice. Among those would have been musicians, whose art received a particular nod in this piece. Indeed, I have found, in seeking the rare pieces which show this kind of commixture of

modes, that often such pieces specifically mention music or singing in their texts.

Meditabor[6] is another unusual offertory, with striking parallelism of text and a similarly transformed ending, though it remains in mode two. The parallelism is more direct, for it amounts to a repetition of the same idea. The text falls into two very similar lines, including the repetition of several words at the end of the lines. This text shows a prominence of alliteration, the repetition of consonants: Prominent is m at the beginnings of words, but there is a more general use of liquid consonants throughout, especially m, n, and l, and of voiced consonants, d and b. All of these serve to make the sound of the text smooth, liquid, and eminently singable.

As in *Exspectans*, the beginning figure is unique in the course of the piece, starting from a low E, the lowest note of the piece and never repeated; it moves quickly to the conventional intonation notes for mode two on A: G-A-C. What follows reiterates that same figure, setting a pattern for phrases to follow. The first verse concludes with a reiterated figure C-E-D on "dilexi"; this prominent figure, including the highest pitch of the piece, by its repetition emphasizes the motivation for the whole verse: "which I have loved exceedingly." The reiteration of the figure ever so slightly suggests a reticence to leave this word before it finally descends to the final. The second verse repeats the G-A-C intonation twice and then proceeds to a repeat of "which I have loved." This repeat begins as the previous phrase on that text, but is then extended substantially; after more reiteration, it descends to the F below (for the first time in the piece) and lingers there long enough to suggest that the piece might do as *Exspectans* did and end there. Instead, it returns to A and in completely stepwise motion rises through a quilisma to C and descends again, repeating this figure once again, as if to linger on it and postpone the ending as long as possible. I know of no other cadence in a Gregorian piece quite like it. If one had been skeptical about the reticence to leave the cadence at the end of the first verse, this

[6] *Graduale*, p. 356; *Liber*, pp. 548f.

place surely confirms the notion that the depiction of "which I have loved" represents a desire to hold on as long as possible to that which is loved. Moreover, this desire is supported affectively by the sensibly attractive elements of stepwise motion, the undulation back and forth of the figure, and the use of quilismas.

These two pieces, even though they were originally sung in opposite parts of the year, are so memorable that it is easy to see that their use of the low F in relation to the figures of mode two on A complements each other: what the one does forms a contrast to what the other does, and each gains in clarity and meaning by it. In some ways they are quite conventional chants, making use of the usual mode-two figures; yet their unique features make them stand out and be quite memorable. These unique features are most likely the creation of Carolingian cantors in their final redaction of Gregorian chants, for the Old Roman versions of these two chants[7] remain in mode two throughout, without touching upon the major third below the final at all. Such Carolingian redactions are noted for their representation of specific meanings in the texts, like those shown here.

[7] Cf. *Die Gesänge des altrömischen Graduale, Vat. Lat. 5319*, ed. Margareta Landwehr-Melnicki, Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi, II (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), pp. 276ff., 282f.

16

OFFERTORY CHANTS WITH REPEATS: TWO *JUBILATE DEO*S, *PRECATUS EST MOYSES*, *DE PROFUNDIS*, AND *DOMINE IN AUXILIUM*

Gregorian chant is distinguished by a certain Roman economy, scarcely ever repeating a text, except in the case of litanies. There are several offertories, though, which make repetitions within their texts, and they often occasion the question, why? In considering their texts, it is clear that these repetitions are for a variety of reasons.

Perhaps the most interesting repetition occurs in a pair of offertories, both beginning "Jubilate Deo," the first in mode five, the second, in mode one.[1] These two chants, though their texts

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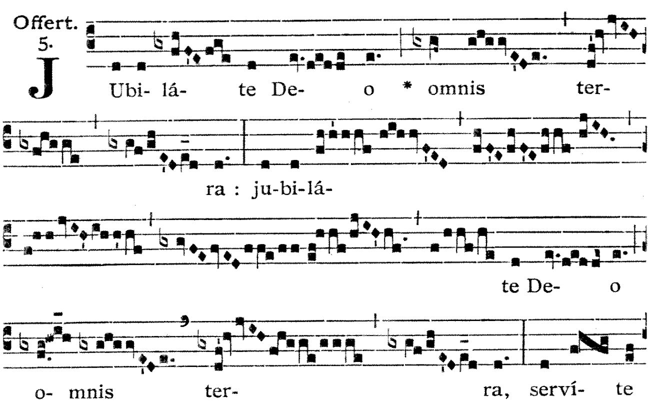
[1] Mode five: *Graduale Romanum* [GR] (Tournai: Desclée, 1961), p. 66; *Liber Usualis* [LU] (Tournai: Desclée, 1961), 480; *Graduale Triplex* [GT] (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1979), 259–60, and *Graduale Romanum* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1974) [same pagination as previous volume]; *Offertoriale Triplex cum Versiculis* [Ott] (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1985), 23–25, and Carolus Ott, ed. *Offertoriale sive Versus Offertoriorum cantus Gregoriani* (Tournai: Desclée, 1935) [same pagination as previous volume]; mode one: GR, 69–70; LU, 486–7; GT, 227–28; Ott, 69–71; *Gregorian Missal* [GM] (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1990), 371, 434. These sources except for GT can be seen online at musicasacra.com (Ott in 1935 ed.). Originally these chants occurred on the First and Second Sundays after Epiphany, now on the First and Second Sunday in Ordinary Time; since 1921, the first Sunday was replaced by the Holy Family, and thus the first of these pieces was not often sung before the readjustment of the calendar after the Second Vatican Council; after the council it has not been

come from different psalms,[2] take their main point of departure from their first two words, which they have in common: the injunction to sing joyfully, to jubilate. Their placement on consecutive Sundays suggests not only the joyful character of the Epiphany season, but also that their direct comparison is invited.

The musical injunction, "Jubilate Deo," forms the topic of the beginning of both chants, for musically speaking it is more specific than simply "sing joyfully"; rather, the joyful singing is accomplished through a jubilus, a long melismatic passage on a single syllable. Thus, the response to the injunction, "Jubilate" is a repeat of the text in which the jubilus occurs upon its accented syllable. In each chant this melisma is made more beautiful by its own internal organization. Each makes it clear that its repeat of the first word is anything but a simple melodic repeat.

In the first, *Jubilate Deo omnis terra* (Ex. 1), the initial intonation Jubilate rises to a c and then descends to center around F and G.[3] The repeat "Jubilate" then projects a melisma that clearly sets off in a new direction, creating a series of segments, varying the third, a–c:

EXAMPLE 1: JUBILATE DEO OMNIS TERRA



heard much, since that Sunday is observed as the Baptism of Christ, the chants for the first Sunday being relegated to the weekdays.

[2] Ps. 99:1–2; Ps. 65:1–2, 16.

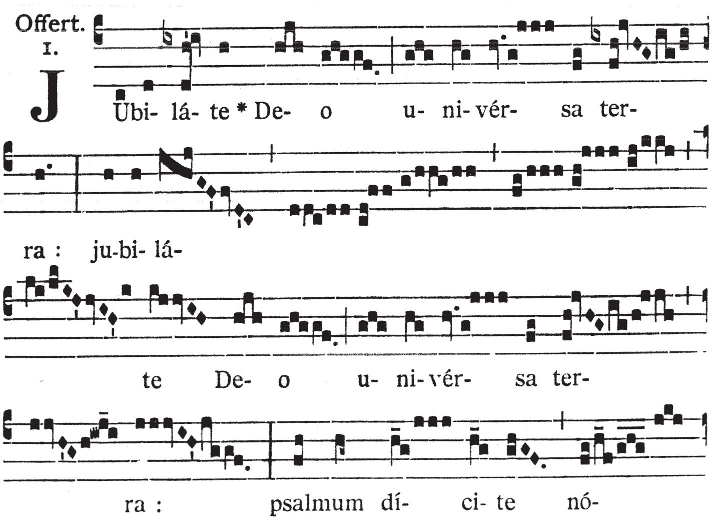
[3] Pitches are designated as in the medieval gamut: A-G entirely below middle c; a-g surrounding and including middle c; and aa–ee entirely above middle c.

(1) a–c emphasizes c, falling briefly through a to F;
(2) a–c is recovered, adding another third, c–e;
(3) a–c–e now turns slightly downward, leading to
(4) an alternate third b-flat to G leads downward to F, but then a–c–e is recovered, as in #2
(5) a–c leads back down to F, leading in turn to "Deo: repeated exactly as in the initial intonation.

Each of these motivic segments develops an idea from the previous one, creating a coherent whole that amounts to a kind of progressive variation.

The second, *Jubilate Deo universa terra* (Ex. 2), begins with a formulaic mode-one intonation and leads to a musical colon, cadencing on what amounts to a kind of half-cadence on "universa

EXAMPLE 2: JUBILATE DEO UNIVERSA TERRA



terra," that indicates that something more is to come. The melisma which follows is quite different from that of the previous piece: it forms one very large melodic gesture that reaches a peak and resolves to "Deo," reiterating that word exactly from the intonation. The stages are:

(1) beginning on a it adds a c above, only to plummet to the C an octave below;
(2) that C alternates with double notes (bistropha) on D then on F, then on a;
(3) then it becomes triple notes (tristropha) on a then c, with a bistropha on d;
(4) it rises finally through e to an f above, the peak, turning back to c and then a.

The overall shape of this melisma is a large arch, whose beauty is its breadth and scope, comprising a range of an octave and a fourth.

Both of these chants, in musically quite different ways, respond to the imperative "jubilate," by jubilating, singing a jubilus. Incidentally, both complete chants comprise two psalm verses, each consisting of two complete statements. These statements are strikingly distinguished from the verse of the melisma musically, in the first by a shift of emphasis upon B-flat to B-natural, and in the second by a gradual ascent and descent, which helps to create the overall shape of the piece, as well as a remarkable repose at its end. The mode-one *Jubilate* is one of the longer offertories of the year, one which must have been very well liked, for it is repeated on another Sunday, in the Easter season.[4]

An even longer offertory, *Precatus est Moyses*,[5] is made longer by a substantial repeat: It contains a prayer of Moses, and the repeated line is the introduction to the prayer by the narrator: "Moses prayed in the sight of the Lord his God and said:" The repeat is exact, except for "et dixit" (and said): the first time, "et dixit" is set to a wide-ranging melisma (18 notes), touching upon the lowest note of the piece; the second time, it is set more simply, rising from that lowest note directly to the final (nine notes). From there Moses' prayer gradually rises to an intense peak on

4 Originally called the Fourth Sunday after Easter, now the Fifth Sunday of Easter (the same day).

5 Ex. 12:11, 15; originally for the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost; now for the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time; GR, 352–3; LU, 1030–1; GT, 317–18; Ott, 126–27; GM, 519–20.

"memento Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob," which plea is then heard by the Lord, as the narrator tells; however, the narration does not return to the lower range of the beginning; seemingly Moses' prayer has so convinced the Lord that its narration is told in the higher pitch as well; the low pitch of the beginning never returns.

Thus the beginning is a foil musically for the climactic prayer of Moses making use of a very low register in contrast to what follows. The repetition gives greater proportion and balance to the prayer and the conclusion. In addition, it calls attention to what Moses says by varying "et dixit."

Another pair of offertories, *Domine in auxlium*[6] and *De profundis*,[7] uses a different manner of repeat: the initial short line is repeated at the end of the piece in the manner of a refrain, or antiphon. The effect, in retrospect, is as if the chant consisted of a refrain, a verse, and then a repeat of the refrain. Both of these chants had melismatic verses in the medieval transmission,[8] so that they should be classed as responsories, not antiphons (the distinction being that antiphons, such as introits and communions, have psalm-tone verses while responsories, such as graduals and alleluias, have melismatic verses). Still, within the responsory itself, there is what appears to be the vestige of an antiphonal use, at least in the sense that it includes the repetition of a short refrain.

Do these pieces represent a vestige of an older antiphonal practice, or an older style of responsorial singing? The evidence is mixed, for none of the earliest manuscript sources of the Mass

[6] Ps. 39:14–15; originally for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; now for the Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time; GR, 364–65; LU, 1046; GT, 331; Ott, 106–7; GM, 540.

[7] Ps. 129:1–2; originally for the Twenty-Third and following Sundays after Pentecost; now for the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time; GR, 388–89; LU, 1076–77; GT, 368; Ott, 97–100; GM, 594–95.

[8] Such verses disappeared in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and are not found in the modern gradual; they were published by Ott in 1935 (cf. Ott), and recommended for liturgical use under Pope Pius XII. One such verse was retained in traditional use, in the funeral Mass, where the extra ceremonies at the coffin require a longer offertory chant.

propers containing text only,[9] indicates a repeat at all for either chant. Likewise, in the entire tradition of sources with musical notation, indications of the repeats are infrequent. Still, a few very early notated sources have the repeats. Moreover, the absence of such repeats in written sources does not rule out the possibility that such repeats could have been taken by tradition. Thus, the jury is out concerning the early history of these repeats.

This pair of offertories, without the repeat of their refrains, would be on the short side for offertories, so these repeats serve to bring them up to a nearly normal length. Moreover, the character of the "refrain" melody in each case is striking. *De profundis* begins on the lowest note of the piece, a note which does not occur until the conclusion of the melody before the repeat. This lowest note is a nice representation of the text "out of the depths"; the melody proceeds out of its deepest note. Both of these refrains have a reiterative character—they center upon one pitch and make use of repeated notes (*bistropha* or *tristropha*). This is a characteristic of many offertories; I speculate that its liturgical function is to elicit an element of increased solemnity in preparation for the most solemn moments of the Mass, the preface, Sanctus, and Eucharistic prayer.

These five offertories represent some of the longest and shortest of the offertories; yet their use of repetition sets them off as well as unique and most interesting pieces.

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[9] *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, ed. René Jean Hesbert (Brussels: Vromant, 1935).

17

TWO NARRATIVE COMMUNIONS: *DICIT DOMINUS, IMPLETE HYDRIAS AQUA*, AND *FILI, QUID FECISTI NOBIS SIC?*

Among the Gregorian propers of the Mass, perhaps the most varied are the communions. In fact, recent scholarship has proposed that this variation is the result of a program of composition in which the communion antiphons reflect the diversity of liturgical seasons. James McKinnon[1] in a seminal article set out the seasonal differences:

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS: texts from Old Testament prophets (including David) in a restrained and lyrical musical style.

POST-CHRISTMAS: narrative texts drawn from the gospels of the day sometimes in an extravagant musical style.

LENTEN WEEKDAYS: an original series of communion antiphons, dating from before the time that Thursdays were celebrated liturgically and in consecutive psalm-number order; some of the series have had the psalmodic texts replaced with texts from the gospel of the day.

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[1] James McKinnon, "The Eighth-Century Frankish-Roman Communion Cycle," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 45 (1992), 179–227. This is an article well worth the attention of anyone who sings the Gregorian propers, for it illuminates the communion antiphons for the entire year.

Lenten Sundays and Holy Week: mainly psalmodic texts, but with a few gospel texts of striking depth and dramatic value.

Easter Season: New Testament texts, both epistles and gospels, the gospel texts being from the gospel of the day, but the epistles not from the epistle of the day. For the time from Ascension to Pentecost, most of these New Testament pieces are actually borrowed from responsories of the night office.

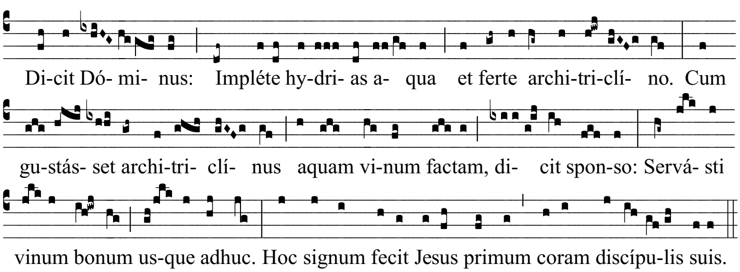
Sundays after Pentecost: a series of texts centered upon themes of Eucharist, sacrifice, and harvest, placed in psalm-number order (though they are not consecutively numbered psalms), but including texts from the wisdom literature and the gospels; the series begins with four of the replaced psalm-based communions from the weekdays of Lent, proceeds to a series of Eucharist, sacrifice, and harvest texts, with a few concerning justice toward the end.

Thus, even though there is a psalm-number ordering, the communion chants show a striking thematic content, not that of a single theme for a particular Sunday, but rather a broad thematic sweep through the series of communion antiphons of the season.

Two communion antiphons for the post-Christmas season can illustrate a small part of the richness of this repertory. They are on narrative texts which include an element of dialogue; their musical setting distinguishes the participants of the dialogue by range. They reflect the gospels of their days, which in turn narrate a series of epiphanies, initial manifestations of the Lord to the world—Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana and his manifestation of precocious wisdom as an adolescent in the finding in the temple.

Dicit Dominus, implete hydrias aqua summarizes the story of the wedding at Cana through the narration of a dialogue. The narrator introduces the Lord's words in a middle range, centered upon the third F to A. The Lord's words are in a lower register, at first around the third D to F, but rise to a peak on C. The initial lower register and repetition of the same figures emphasize the dignity and gravity of the Lord, but the rise to the peak gives his words an element of eloquence that rounds out his short speech. The narrator develops the dialogue by filling out a triad, F-A-C, introducing

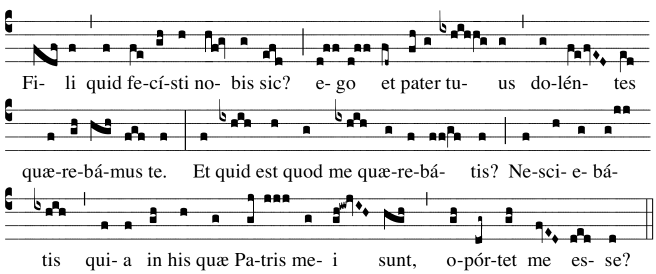
the chief steward. The surprise of the chief steward at tasting the best wine saved for the last is palpable in the register of his speech, which outlines a higher triad, A-C-E. The narrator concludes by recounting that this was Jesus' first miracle done before his disciples. This summary also brings the piece to a musical closure, emphasizing the F triad, just as F had been the center of the beginning of the narrative. The ranges of the characters in the narrative are a third apart from each other, and their differences are made quite clear by each beginning with his own characteristic third.



> Jesus saith to them: Fill the waterpots with water and carry to the chief steward of the feast. When the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, he saith to the bridegroom: Thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in the presence of his disciples. John 2: 7–11

A striking feature of this differentiation of pitch is that it is similar to the use of register in the singing of the passion during Holy Week. There also three different registers distinguish three similar participants in the narrative, and in the notation of our present chant book, they are distinguished by three symbols: the narrator (C=chronista), Christ (†), and the turba—everyone else who speaks in the narration (S=synagoga). The history of this is varied and interesting. The letters C, T (for the cross), and S, were understood as indicating the characters only since the fifteenth century. Before that the letters used were more various, and indicated sometimes range, sometimes tempo. The oldest seem to have represented tempo: c=celeriter, fast; l=leniter, gentle, slack;

t=tenere, hold, i.e., slowly. In a recent paper, it was pointed out that these letters antedate the use of such letters in the oldest of the neumed manuscripts of Gregorian chant, those of St. Gall and Einsiedeln, and seem to have their origin in Northumbria.[2] Others represented pitch, a=alte or s=sursum, high; I=inferius, low, etc. It seems that the narrative with differentiated pitches was originally sung by a single deacon, and that it is not until the thirteenth century that there is clear evidence of the assignment of these parts of the narrative to separate singers. In the tradition of chant singing that I was taught, these three parts were distinguished by tempo, the narrator in a medium tempo, Christ in a slower tempo, representing dignity and gravity, and the synagoga in a quicker tempo, representing a rashness or foolishness.



Son, why hast thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?

A charming variation on this pattern can be seen in the communion antiphon *Fili, quid fecisti nobis sic?* traditionally assigned to the First Sunday after Epiphany, now used on the feast of the Holy Family. It gives an epitome of the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple. There is no narrator, only a dialogue between Mary and Jesus. But now, it is the mother who takes the lower register;

[2] Michel Huglo and Barbara Haggh, "The Oldest Gospel MSS with the Letters for the Passion," Eighteenth Congress of the International Musicological Society, Zürich, July 16, 2007; see also Kurt von Fischer, "Passion 1. Monophonic Passion," *Grove Music Online,* ed. Laura Macy (accessed August 1, 2007), http://www.grovemusic.com.

the higher register represents Jesus as a child whose voice has not yet changed. Mary's speech begins with the third, D-F, rising to a peak in the middle. This lower register effectively portrays the mother in a mode of reprimand, calling forth all of her authority in a firm and low voice. The Child's response begins with the third, F-A, and when he utters the revealing punchline "Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" it rises to its peak in reiterated C's, dramatically juxtaposing his youth and his divinity. The expected relation of ranges is reversed in this piece, and this little detail makes the Child's epiphany, revealing himself as being about his Father's business, immediate and charming.

We have advocated the communion antiphons as a good place to begin singing the Gregorian propers. What better way to introduce a choir to the repertory than through such vivid and attractive pieces? The article of James McKinnon is an indispensable key to the richness and variety of this repertory and will repay close study. The progress through the year, stopping at each stage to explore yet another one of these gems, can be a path of discovery and delight for a choir. When the full year rolls around and the singer recognizes that this is where he came in, there is a realization for the first time of the immense scope of the repertory; this newly found familiarity with pieces studied before is, in my experience, a great revelation to the singer, and at this point his devotion to the enterprise is assured.

18

PASSER INVENIT: A COMMUNION ON A SIMILE

One of the most beloved communion chants of the year is *Passer invenit*, sung on the Third Sunday of Lent in the extraordinary form; in the ordinary form it is sung on the same Sunday, unless the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman is read, and on the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time as well.

See *Passer invenit* from *Graduale Romanum*[1] on the following page. The text is from Ps. 83 (Vulgate numbering), whose first verse suggests the topic of the whole psalm: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" The present verse is identified by Cassiodorus as a simile:

> Here we find that he has set down these two species of birds to recommend to us a type of simile. A sparrow flies exceedingly swiftly, and cannot bear to dwell in forests but longs to seek for itself a home in holes in walls. When it has found such a home, it is delighted and glories with great joy, for it believes that it is no longer in danger of ambush from various enemies. The soul finds joy in a similar way, when it realizes that a lodging is prepared

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Passer Invenit from *Graduale Romanum*[1]



For the sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtledove a nest where she may lay her young ones: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever.

for it in the kingdom of heaven. The turtle is most chaste in his controlled abstemiousness, for he is content with a single mating and is known to build a nest for his fledglings; he does not seek a home readymade as the sparrow does, but hastens to fashion a new one for himself from odds and ends. . . .

The phrase "Thy altars, O God of Hosts" is to be attached the words of the first verse of the psalm, "How lovable they are!" This figure is

[1] *Graduale Romanum* (Sablé sur Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1974), p. 306; the pitches of this version are essentially in agreement with those of the Montpellier Codex, the earliest pitch-specific source for the Gregorian tradition, *Paléographie musicale*, VIII (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1901–05; reprint, Berne: Herbert Lang, 1972), pp. 45–46.

> known as apo koinou or "in common" when an earlier phrase is matched with a later one.[2]

Thus just as the sparrow and the turtledove find a dwelling-place, so we find one in the altars of the Lord, and ultimately in heaven.

One reason choirs especially cherish this chant is the charming *onomatopoeia* (word-painting) on *turtur*, where three liquescent neumes in a row imitate the cooing of the turtledove, especially the two which represent the r in the repeated syllable "tur." They love to sing these liquescent notes and do not fail to miss the very concrete imitation of something in the text, which in turn makes the attractiveness of heaven all the more concrete.

But there is hidden in this unusual melody a more profound representation of the text: the descent of a bird to its nest, a simile of the soul finding repose in the dwelling-place of the Lord, is represented by a melody whose overall contour is a persuasive descent. Moreover, this descent is emphasized by involving a very unusual shift of mode. This involves the transposition of modes, even the main mode of the piece, mode one, transposed from D to a.[3]

The three modes used in the piece need to be understood from their finals in transposition and their reciting notes:[4]

> *Passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum*: as it is initially heard—mode two, transposed up an octave; final: d, reciting note: f;
>
> *ubi reponat pullos suos*: mode three, transposed up a fourth (with a b-flat above its final making a striking Phrygian cadence; final: a, reciting note:

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[2] Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 3 vols., tr. P. G. Walsh, Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. 51–3 (New York: Paulist Press, 1990–91), Vol. II, pp. 314–15.

[3] I am using the Guidonian letter names to designate the octaves of the scale: A–G fall within the bass clef, a–g around middle C, and aa–ee within the treble clef.

[4] Reciting notes are princially the notes in each mode upon which the preponderance of syllables is sung in recitative psalmody, i.e., psalm tones; but they also have their place in discrete chants as the principal focal pitch above the final, such as the pitch f on "-ser invenit" of the present chant.

f, so that in retrospect, the whole initial phrase can be viewed as suggesting mode three on a;

altaria tua Domine virtutum: back to mode two on d;

Rex meus et Deus meus: the most striking shift, since the b-flat at "pullos" is now replaced by a b-natural, making this phrase be mode one, transposed to a; final: a, reciting note: e; this is the point that the focus of the piece drops from the final on d down to a final on a;

Beati qui habitant in domo tua, in saeculum saeculi laudabunt te: this final phrase reviews the entire range of the piece in a broad arch contour, with another graceful melodic descent, emphasizing each tone of the scale in succession aa down to a, as follows:

aa gf e e d c b a

in domo tu- a, in saeculum saeculi laudabunt te.

Even here, the b-natural comes as a bit of a surprise, and it must be reiterated (four occurrences) for the cadence on a to be unambiguously in mode one.

This unusual modal mixture was the subject of theoretical commentary in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, where such chants were analyzed as beginning in one mode, passing through a second and ending in a final mode. The reason for setting this mode-one chant on a rather than on D is evidently to allow for both b-flat and b-natural in both mode three and mode one on a, b-flat being the only "accidental" allowed in the scale used for the chants.[5]

[5] The Guidonian gamut allows a flat or a natural at b and at bb, but not at B—there only a natural. Dom Johner notes that introit, offertory, and communion of the Third Sunday of Lent all involve modal mixtures, though his analysis differs somewhat from mine, and he does not mention the liquescence or the striking descent created by the mixture; Dom Dominic Johner, O.S.B., *The Chants of the Vatican Gradual* (Toledo, Ohio: Gregorian Institute of America, 1948; reprint, Richmond, Virginia: Church Music Association of America, 2007), p. 136.

There are a number of chants with such mixed modality. They probably stem from a time before the systematic redaction within a fixed scale system, and it is suspected that their final writing down may have altered some pitches, even at that, to get them to fit the diatonic system. In any case, it is clear that such pieces caused problems for musicians of the time, as witnessed by two variant versions of this chant.

Passer invenit from the *Graduale of St. Yrieix*



The first is the communion chant with this text in the *Graduale of St. Yrieix* of the eleventh century.[6] Aside from its being in the same mode (mode one, but untransposed) and assigned to the same day, it appears at first to be a composition independent from the Gregorian communion discussed above. But closer inspection shows a couple of places in common: "Rex

[6] *Paléographie musicale*, XIII (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1925; reprint, Berne: Herbert Lang, 1971), p. 94; this source does not indicate B-flats, but one would naturally take a B-flat on "domum" in the first line and "virtutum" in the second, by the rule that an ascent to B should use the flat if the melody goes down to F before it goes up to C.

meus" is identical for the first four notes. In the Gregorian piece, this is the crux of the shift of mode, a memorable moment in the chant, expressed by a memorable melodic figure. The subsequent phrase "et Deus meus" is almost identical; the difference is that between the two phrases "Rex meus," and "Et Deus meus," the cadence tones have been reversed, D then C in the Gregorian version; C then D in St. Yrieix. In both versions, the final phrase beginning "beati . . ." rehearses the entire range of the piece in a broadly arching contour, but without any exact melodic correspondences, until the last phrase, "laudabunt te," which corresponds exactly. Thus in the St. Yrieix version the part of the Gregorian piece that was in other modes is entirely new, but the part that was in mode one reflects fragments of that melody. How can this have happened? Was it an intentional recomposition to avoid the mixed mode, or did the mixed mode of the Gregorian version cause such confusion in oral transmission that at some point, singers had to temporize by making up a coherent mode-one melody. One can only speculate, but something like the latter alternative seems more likely.

Passer invenit from *Graduale Cisterciense*



There is a version, however, that explicitly "corrects" the modal mixture. The reform of the Cistercian chants in the twelfth century set out to eliminate modal irregularities, and this chant exemplifies this correction.[7] The chant is presented as in mode one on D. Its beginning, with some slight variation is a transposition down an octave from the Gregorian version, except that the telling shift down to mode three on "pullos," has been kept on D. At the phrase "Rex meus . . ." the shift to a transposition down a fourth is made; this confirms that this is the place of the shift of mode in the Gregorian version, since the shift keeps the piece in mode one on D. Finally, at the point that the Gregorian version reviewed the shape of the whole piece, "in domo tua," this phrase segment is transposed down a fourth, confirming that this segment in the Gregorian version had also touched on the original mode two on d (the octave above); the following material, "in saeculum . . ." falls back to the normal transposition, emphasized by a prominent mode-one figure, D–a–b-flat–a. This has been a careful but clear retransposition of all the elements of the original version. Its value is mainly as a witness of what twelfth-century theorists saw to be the modal mixture needing correction.

That modal mixture in the original Gregorian version, then, has three striking points of descent: (1) the descent to mode three on "pullos suos," a beautifully affective shift because of the Phrygian cadence (b-flat to a); (2) the shift down to mode one on a, emphasized by the comparison of its b-natural with the previous b-flat; and (3) the repeat of the descent from mode two on d to mode one on a at "in domo tua."

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[7] The standard work on this subject is P. Solutor Marosszéki, S.O.Cist. [Ralph March, S.O.Cist.], *Les Origines du chant cistercien: Researches sur les réformes du plainchant cistercien au XIIe siècle*, Analeca sacri ordinis cisterciensis, Annus VIII, Fasc. 1–2 (Rome: Tipografia Polyglotta Vaticana, 1952); Marosszéki does not mention this chant; the version I present here is from *Graduale Cisterciense* (Westmalle, Belgium: Typis Cisterciensibus, 1960), p. 120; that this is the same as that produced by the reform of the twelfth century is indicated by its occurrence in a nearly identical version in the Dominican chant tradition which stems from the Cistercian chants of that time; cf. *Graduale juxta ritum sacri ordinis praedicatorum* (Rome: Santa Sabina, 1936), pp. 109–10.

It should be recalled that the normal contour of Gregorian chants is an arch—beginning low, rising to a peak, and descending to the source. When this contour is not used one should look for a reason in the text.[8] Here, the reason is clear—a long-term descent from a prominent high beginning to a graciously approached point of arrival represents at one and the same time the descent of a bird in fulfillment of its need of a place to put its chicks and the finding of a place of repose by the soul in the altars of the Lord, even in heaven.

[8] I have shown this in my "Word-Painting and Formulaic Chant," pp. 185–216.

19

THE NEW ANTIPHONALE ROMANUM

Nearly forty years ago the *Liturgia Horarum* was published in fulfillment of the mandate of the Second Vatican Council and promulgated under the authority of Pope Paul VI.[1] This was the reform of the divine office mandated by the council. Nowhere did it indicate how that office was to be sung, and in fact, it was very difficult to sing it, for it seems that it was not meant to be sung at all. The antiphons to the psalms, for the most part, were new and did not have any Gregorian melodies in the tradition. It retained some fundamental values: the recitation of psalms and canticles with antiphons and the hymns, though the hymns appeared at the beginning of each office. The structure of each office was standardized so that they all looked quite the same; the purposeful differences in shape and character between the various hours of the day and night were

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[1] *Liturgia Horarum Iuxta Ritum Romanum*, Officium Divinum ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II Instauratum Auctorite Pauli PP. VI Promulgatum, Editio typica, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972).

minimized. It seems that the new office was confected by a committee to provide an easily manageable breviary for the private recitation of busy priests, most of whom had no inkling of the beauties and subtleties of the sung office.[2]

Those who wished to sing the new office had to make up their own version of it, either composing melodies[3] for the given antiphon texts or replacing those antiphons with Gregorian melodies with different texts; some continued to sing the old office out of the *Liber Usualis* or the *Antiphonale Romanum*. In the mean time, a revision of the Monastic Office was begun with the publication of the *Psalterium Monasticum* in 1981.[4] This retained a much more traditional structure, according to monastic usage, and was quite congruent with the previous *Antiphonale Monasticum* of 1934. Two years later, an accommodation of the *Liturgia Horarum* to Gregorian melodies was published in the *Ordo Cantus Officii*.[5] It was simply a list of the antiphons to be used as replacements for those of the *Liturgia Horarum*, together with brief references to modern books where these antiphons could be found. Strangely, though, most of the references were to the *Psalterium Monasticum* of 1981 or to the *Antiphonale Monasticum*, and not to any Roman Antiphonary. This means that for those

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[2] A thorough and valuable critique of this office is found in László Dobszay, *The Bugnini-Liturgy and the Reform of the Reform*, Musica Sacrae Meletemata, Vol. 5 (Front Royal, Virginia: Catholic Church Music Associates, 2003), Chapter 3, "The Divine Office," pp. 45–84; the book is avaiable on line at musicasacra.com under "Teaching Aids" and the chapter is also found as a separate article under "Sacred Music Articles."

[3] A priest friend of mine visited Solesmes in the late seventies and inquired about a new Roman Antiphonary; his inquiry was met with another question, "Don't you have any composers?"

[4] *Psalterium cum Canticis Novi & Veteris Testamenti Iuxta Regulam S.P.N. Benedicti & Alia Schemata Liturgiæ Horarum Monasticæ cum Cantu Gregoriano* (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1981).

[5] *Ordo Cantus Officii*, Officium Divinum ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II Instauratum Auctorite Pauli PP. VI Promulgatum, Editio typica (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1983); this is available on musicasacra.com under "Church Documents."

used to singing the Roman office from the old books, there are continual pesky variants from the familiar versions of the melodies. This use of monastic sources was presumably because even the melodies of the 1934 antiphonale represented over twenty years of progress in Gregorian scholarship at Solesmes and were thus to be preferred over those of the 1912 antiphonale. However, it also meant that, despite the now drastic differences between the form of the Roman and monastic offices, the musical differences were minimized, since it was the monastic versions of the melodies which were prescribed.

The new *Antiphonale Romanum II*, a volume of 790 pages, is only for Vespers of Sundays and Feast Days (thirty-one days in the Sanctorale); presumably the first volume will be for Lauds and will be as extensive. This will leave the other hours and lesser days still to be provided with chant books. A small library may eventually be needed to sing the whole office. Perhaps that will never come about, for the greatest demand will surely be for Vespers, for Sundays, the high feasts of the Temporale, and for the occasional feast of the Blessed Virgin or an apostle.

There is no question that this volume represents progress of a monumental sort. There are now fourteen psalm tones, a cycle of four weeks in the psalter, each week with somewhat varying antiphons; many days have three antiphons to the Magnificat to correspond with the three-year cycle of readings at Mass, since these antiphons customarily refer to that gospel. The volume also represents a substantial change in notation. It appears to be in the traditional Gregorian square notation, but closer inspection reveals that there are no longer any horizontal episemas or ictus or even dots of length of the Solesmes school. Rather, a few new note shapes occasionally appear; one needs to refer back to the *Liber Hymnarius* for an account of the interpretation of these shapes.[6]

[6] *Liber Hymnarius cum Invitatoriis & Aliquibus Responsoriis*, Antiphonale Romanum Secundum Liturgiam Horarum, Vol. 2 (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1983); "Prænotanda," pp. vii–xvi; there is an English translation of this introduction in Peter Jeffrey, "The New Chantbooks from Solesmes," *Notes*, Second Series, 47 (1991), 1039–1063; a translation by Fr. Columba Kelly, O.S.B, can be found on line at http://sacredmusicproject.com/chantinstruction/solesmes-preface-liber-hymnarius/.

Quarter-bars, half-bars, and full bars are still used, but nowhere in the new volume is there an indication of their interpretation.

The system of antiphons, the basic problem of the *Liturgia Horarum*, has been quite thoroughly updated, with many of the antiphons indicated by the *Ordo Cantus Officii* replaced by genuine Gregorian antiphons from historical sources. Such revisions may be studied by a look at the antiphons for Sunday Vespers. It is not always realized that the first real revision of the Medieval tradition of the office took place under Pope Pius X and is represented by the antiphonary of 1912, in which the psalter was substantially reordered, and antiphons replaced. The first table of antiphons shows the results of the revision of 1912 in relation to the office previous to that and to the monastic office.

Three out of five of the antiphons for Sunday Vespers were changed in this reform, in spite of the fact that the psalms remained the same. In the case of the Magnificat antiphon (The Third Sunday in Lent is given as an example), essentially the same antiphon was kept.

The comparison of the three stages of the antiphons for the 1972 *Liturgia Horarum* is shown in the second table, where a remarkable shift can be seen. First of all, those of the original post-conciliar office show very little continuity with the previous office;

ANTIPHONS FOR SUNDAY VESPERS BEFORE 1972

	pre-1912 (*Vesperale Romanum*, 1882)	*Antiphonale Romanum*, 1912	*Antiphonale Monasticum*, 1934
Ps. 109	Dixit Dominus	Dixit Dominus	Dixit Dominus
Ps. 110	Fidelia omnia mandata	Magna opera Domini	Fidelia omnia mandata
Ps. 111	In mandatis ejus	Qui timet Dominum	In mandatis ejus
Ps. 112	Sit nomen Domini	Sit nomen Domini	Sit nomen Domini
Ps. 113	Nos qui vivimus	Deus autem noster	Nos qui vivimus
Ant. Ad Magnificat Lent 3	Extollens vocem quaedam mulier	Extollens quaedam mulier	Extollens quaedam mulier

only one of the eight antiphons in the new office was used for the Sunday office in the traditional Vespers, either before or after the reform of 1912. One additional antiphon, *Sacerdos in aeternum* was borrowed from the office of Corpus Christi. The first attempt at providing Gregorian antiphons for the *Liturgia Horarum*, in 1983, drew all its antiphons from the books of the pre- and post-1912 Vespers. Two from each, with *Dixit Dominus*, which occurred in both traditions, being used all four Sundays.

The new antiphonale draws four of its antiphons from the Vespers of the pre-1912 tradition; two additional ones come from other than Sunday Vespers; one corresponds to the antiphon of the *Liturgia Horarum*, but is itself from a historical source; a final antiphon is probably from such a historical source as well. The three

ANTIPHONS FOR SUNDAY VESPERS SINCE 1972

	Liturgia Horarum, 1972	*Ordo Cantus Officii*, 1983	*Antiphonale Romanum II*, 2009
I. Ps. 109	Virgam potentiae suae	†*Dixit Dominus	(§)Virgam virtutis tuae
Ps. 113A	A facie Domini	*Deus autem noster	‡Ex Aegypto
Cant. Apoc.	Regnavit Dominus	—	—
II. Ps. 109	‡Sacerdos in aeternum	†*Dixit Dominus	‡Juravit Dominus
Ps. 113B	Deus noster in caelo	†Nos qui vivimus	†Nos qui vivimus
Cant. Apoc.	Laudem dicite Deo	—	—
III. Ps. 109	†*Dixit Dominus	†*Dixit Dominus	†*§Dixit Dominus
Ps. 110	Memoriam fecit mirabilium	*Magna opera Domini	†Fidelia omnia mandata
Cant. Apoc.	Regnavit Deus	—	—
IV. Ps. 109	In spendoribus sanctis	†*Dixit Dominus	Ex utero ante luciferum
Ps. 111	Beati qui esuriunt	†In mandatis ejus	†In mandatis ejus
Cant. Apoc.	Laudem dicite Deo	—	—

† = the same antiphon as pre-1912
* = the same antiphon as 1912
§ = the same antiphon as *Liturgia Horarum*, 1972 in the *Antiphonale Romanum II*, 2009
‡ = an antiphon drawn from elsewhere in the pre-1912 and 1912 books

new Sunday Vespers antiphons of the 1912 reform, however, are left behind. This shows the same kind of historical awareness as does the *Graduale Romanum* of 1974, where numerous neo-Gregorian compositions have been replaced with historic Gregorian pieces.

Antiphons for the feast days do not fare quite as well. An example is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, where traditionally both Vespers used a famous series of five antiphons beginning with *O admirabile commercium!* for both first and second Vespers. There being only two psalms and a canticle for these antiphons, the last two are lost; both Vespers use the same three antiphons, so the last two are lost and do not occur anywhere in the book.

There are many things to admire in the new antiphonale, its bringing to light historic Gregorian antiphons not heard in the recent past, its beautiful typography, and the fact that those committed to the new office may confidently sing it with Gregorian melodies.

There are also serious drawbacks; they are largely those of the *Liturgia Horarum* itself. There are only two psalms in Sunday Vespers; in place of the third psalm is a responsorial setting of the "New Testament Canticle" from the Apocalypse. This uses a melody from a short responsory, whose respond is traditionally limited to three and a half iterations; it now occurs fully six times with a briefer, less interesting melody forming an alternate respond, also used six times, all in response to fully twelve verses. The *Liturgia Horarum* had provided antiphons for this canticle, but the editors of the antiphonale understood that the melodies of the short responsories do not have antiphons, so they did not provide any. For the feast days, however, there are antiphons, as in the *Liturgia Horarum*, with a note that these antiphons are to be sung before the responsorial performance in the manner of a trope; of course, this makes little sense liturgically; musically, it is at least a little relief from the monotony of the reiterated responsorial performance of the canticle.

For parish celebration of Sunday Vespers, two psalms plus canticle is a bit meager; why drive ten minutes for a twenty-minute service? One can, of course amplify it by the addition of other music; alternatively, one can sing the old Vespers, with its

five psalms. It is ironic that this new edition finally comes out not long after Pope Benedict's motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* allowed even clergy with the obligation to the office to use the old rite. I suspect that of the numerous places which are beginning to experiment with the singing of Latin Vespers on Sundays, more of them will finally choose to use the old rite.

But now, there is a clear choice, with legitimate Gregorian chant, even when the choice is the new rite. The new antiphonale is a blessing, for now both forms can be experienced in the singing of chant, and the experience cannot help but be a deepening of our understanding of the divine office and of chant itself. There will be much more to be said about the new *Antiphonale Romanum II*, and we should observe it and follow it with great interest.

POLYPHONY



20

KYRIE "CUNCTIPOTENS GENITOR DEUS" *ALTERNATIM*

Kyrie IV, named for the Latin text to which it was once sung, "Cunctipotens Genitor Deus, Omnicreator, eleison," is one of the most widely distributed Kyrie melodies. The inventory of manuscript sources of Kyrie melodies by Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki[1] lists more manuscript sources for this Kyrie than for any other.[2] It was frequently assigned to Marian feasts, with the text "Rex virginum amator Deus," and in its Marian assignment served as the *cantus firmus* for Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe Nostre Dame*. Machaut's mass is the first complete mass cycle by a known composer (including Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei as a coherent set), but it stands in the context of a wide cultivation of polyphonic music for

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[1] Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki, *Das einstimmige Kyrie des lateinischen Mittelalters* (München : Mikrokopie G.m.b.H., 1954) a doctoral dissertation at the University of Erlangen cataloging all the Kyrie melodies in the extensive archive of microfilms of chant manuscripts assembled by Bruno Stäblein.

[2] See the table of melodies on page 113 in my "Gregorian Chant as a *Fundamentum* of Western Musical Culture," above; this was an address to the Sixth International Church Music Congress in Salzburg, August 1974, and this data was a basis for the selection of melodies for the *Liber Cantualis* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1978), pp. 17–54.

the Ordinary of the Mass. During the fourteenth century and into the beginning of the fifteenth century, this music consisted mainly of single independent movements, unrelated to each other in melody or mode, much like the chants for the ordinary.[3] Often these polyphonic movements were based upon a well-known chant, such as Kyrie IV.

One such a setting comes from the Trent Codices, a set of seven manuscripts copied 1445–75 containing an enormous repertory of sacred music.[4] I give it here because of its potential for use in today's liturgy. It consists of three polyphonic sections, Kyrie, Christe, Kyrie. It is likely that these settings were originally performed just as their chant models were, as a nine-fold polyphonic Kyrie, that is, the single Kyrie section was sung three times, the single Christe, three times, and then the second Kyrie, three times. There are some settings, however, that indicate an *alternatim* performance—direct alternation between chant and polyphony: Kyrie (chant), Kyrie (polyphony), Kyrie (chant), Christe (polyphony), Christe, (chant), Christe (polyphony), Kyrie (chant), Kyrie (polyphony), Kyrie (chant). As is so often the case with liturgical manuscripts, well-established conventions are not indicated in the manuscript at all; thus for a Kyrie simply containing a single Kyrie, a single Christe, and a single Kyrie, the arrangement as a nine-fold Kyrie would be left to the singers, who knew well enough what to do.

The present Kyrie has such an arrangement, one Kyrie, one Christe, and another Kyrie in polyphony. Being based upon the chant melody for Kyrie IV, the second Kyrie differs from the first, as does the chant upon which it is based. My own choir has sung this Kyrie for longer than I can remember, and alternated it with the congregation. The congregation often sings the nine-fold

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[3] This repertory can be found throughout the series *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, 24 vols. (Monaco: Editions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1956–1991).

[4] A selection of works from these manuscripts has been published in *Sechs [Sieben] Trienter Codices: Geistliche und weltliche Compositionen des XV. Jahrhunderts, 1.–7. Auswahl*, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Bd. 14–15, 22, 38, 53, 61, 76, 120 (Vienna: Artaria, 1900–70).

chant by itself and upon a few important occasions we then incorporate the polyphonic setting in alternation with the congregation. One might think that the congregation would resent having part of their performance co-opted by the choir, but the opposite is the case: this manner of performance incorporates them into a polyphonic performance, something they could not achieve by themselves. Their singing is most often more enthusiastic on such an occasion than it is when they sing the chant alone. They often comment on this.

There are several ways to arrange the alternation; among them: (1) direct alternation beginning and ending with the chant; (2) direct alternation beginning and ending with polyphony; (3) three-fold alternation, i.e., cantors singing the first chant versicle, congregation singing the second, and choir singing the polyphonic versicle; (4) direct alternation between choir and three soloists, using either of the schemes above. I have given the first arrangement here, though from what I have given, the others could also be done. (In order to make the alternation as clear as possible, I have written out the repeat of the polyphonic Christe versicle.)

The chant begins with a characteristic contour for a Kyrie—a prevalence of generally descending motion, appropriate for Kyrie melodies, since it suggests a gesture of deference and humility. The initial melody begins around the reciting tone, a,[5] and after a gentle rise to c, begins a systematic descent to the final, D. The Christe has an even more consistently descending contour, moving downward directly from the reciting note a. The final Kyrie, however, takes a surprising turn: beginning on the final, D, it rises a fifth, makes an additional rise to c, recalling the similar rise at the beginning of the first Kyrie, and, after dipping down to E, rises and ends upon the reciting note a. One might think this to represent a more hopeful turn after the deference of the first versicles, but it is an unusual turn, since it leaves the cadence on the reciting

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[5] Pitches are here designated by the Guidonian system, i.e., upper case for the octave A–G completely below middle *c*, lower case for the octave *a*–*g* surrounding middle *c*, and double lower case for the fifth *aa*–*ee*, completely above middle *c*.

note, not the final. Theorists have designated such a note a confinal, to indicate its affinity with the actual final.

The polyphony is for two sopranos and one tenor. Their ranges are quite moderate, almost exactly the same as that of the chant—the two soprano parts have identical ranges, including one note below the chant range; the tenor includes one note above the chant range. Thus any singer who can accomplish the range of the chant can also sing the polyphony. A distinctive characteristic of the polyphony is that the two soprano voices cross frequently; this gives the texture an interesting variety, because even equal voices invariably differ slightly in timbre.

The chant melody is incorporated directly into the polyphony, but with some variety. It is carried by the first soprano in the first and last Kyrie versicles, but by the tenor in the Christe. It is polyphony only in the most general sense of the word, since the texture is completely note-against-note, accompanying the chant melody exactly, even without a suspension at the cadence. Still, the crossing of the upper voices allows the incorporation of some contrary motion into the texture, e.g., in mm. 5–7 of the Christe, an element of polyphony.

The theory of counterpoint in the fifteenth century prescribes beginning and ending with perfect intervals, and moving through imperfect intervals; it prohibits parallel perfect intervals, but permits parallel imperfect intervals. Fifteenth-century compositions, such as the works of Dufay, show mainly imperfect intervals between the perfect beginning and ending notes of a phrase, with plenty of parallel sixths and tenths. Calculating the intervals between the outermost sounding voices of the present Kyrie shows a different pattern—nearly equal use of perfect (octaves and twelfths) and imperfect intervals (tenths, sixths, and thirds), more characteristic of the fourteenth century than the fifteenth. This suggests that by the time of the copying of the Trent Codices, this piece was quite old, or else in a notably archaic style.

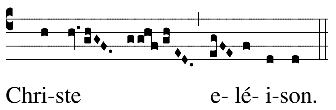
The tempo of the polyphony should be commensurate with that of the chant. A quarter note of the polyphony should be roughly equal to the single notes of the chant. Tuning is crucial, especially of the perfect intervals, which do not tolerate inexact tuning. The sonority and the tuning of the piece are helped by

singing fairly bright vowels. It is useful to rehearse two voices at a time, the chant-bearing voice with each of the other two voices. If a good balance between the voices in terms of both volume and tuning can be achieved for each of these pairs, then the sonority of the whole piece will be very good.

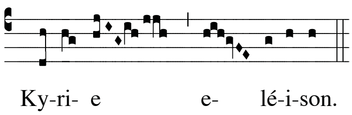
As always in the alternation of chant with polyphony, the striking contrast between the two is an advantage to both; as a listener told me after such a performance (of somewhat later music), the chant makes the polyphony sound so rich, and the polyphony makes the chant sound so pure.

Kyrie Cunctipontens genitor Deus

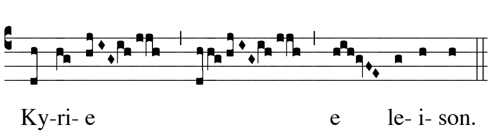



Chri-ste e- lé- i-son.


Chri-ste e - lei - son.
Chri-ste e - lei - son.
Chri-ste e - lei - son.


Ky-ri- e e- lé-i-son.


Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.
Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.
Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.


Ky-ri- e e le- i- son.

21

FROM ELEVATION TO COMMUNION: PIERRE DE LA RUE, *O SALUTARIS HOSTIA*

The communion time provides perhaps the greatest opportunity in the Mass to employ additional music. In most parishes, communicants are numerous, and providing music for the whole time may even be a challenge. The communion antiphon alternated with psalm verses is one good solution—it is expandable to suit the time, according to the number of verses and repetitions of the antiphon. The publication *Communio* by the Church Music Association of America provides those antiphons with their verses. There may also be time for some playing of the organ or a hymn sung by the congregation. If the choir is capable of it, however, a motet can be a very suitable conclusion to the communion time. It should be on a text appropriate to the season, or on a generally appropriate liturgical text, such as, for instance, *Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum*, or even better, on a traditional Eucharistic text.

We have from the Renaissance a number of such Eucharistic motets; one in particular, has been a favorite of the congregation for which my choir sings: Pierre de La Rue's *O salutaris hostia*. This motet is found within the Sanctus of La Rue's *Missa de Sancta*

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Anna, where it replaces the first Osanna. It is thus an "elevation" motet, a devotional piece meant to be sung at the elevations of the host and the chalice. It must be remembered that until the Second Vatican Council, the Sanctus was sung during the silent recitation of the canon of the Mass, and that the first Osanna is a likely place for the elevation to take place. Such elevation motets within Sanctus movements are also found in works of Josquin Des Prez, in a complete Mass (*Tu solus qui facis mirabilia* in the *Missa D'ung aultre amer*), and in two independent Sanctus movements (*Tu lumen, tu splendor Patris* in *Sanctus D'ung aultre amer* and *Honor et benedictio* in *Sanctus de passione*).

Joseph Jungmann cites examples from the thirteenth century and later of prayers of devotion provided to the laity for recitation at the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament, and also of later sung pieces for the elevation: By 1450, *O sacrum convivium* was sung in Strassburg after the Benedictus; in 1512, King Louis XII of France ordered *O salutaris hostia* to be sung at Notre Dame Cathedral between the Sanctus and Benedictus; by 1521 *Ave verum corpus* and *Gaudete flores* were also sung at Paris.[1]

A particularly notable use of such motets is found in the unusual practice at Milan known as *motetti missales*—motets on various sacred texts that replaced the proper liturgical texts; thus a motet designated "loco sanctus" would be sung while the priest recited the normative text of the Sanctus. These *motetti missales* included elevation motets, often designated "ad elevationem," and on such texts as *O salutaris hostia* and *Adoramus te, Christe*. They were in a very homophonic style, often marked with fermatas, sometimes concluding with a section in quick triple time. Stylistically this homophonic style has origins in the lauda, a devotional piece, sometimes in Italian, sung by lay brotherhoods called laudesi. The laude were very simple part songs in a consistently homophonic style.

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1 Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, 2 vols., tr. Francis A. Brunner, C.SS.R (New York: Benziger, 1955), II, 214–17.

Elevations survived into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, witness César Franck's Mass in A, Op. 12, which originally included an *O salutaris hostia* after the Benedictus; this was later replaced with the well-known *Panis angelicus*. Likewise, *Pie Jesu Domine* is found as an elevation in such Requiem Masses as those of Luigi Cherubini, Gabriel Fauré, and Maurice Duruflé. The Cistercian order maintained elevations in chant until the time of the Second Vatican Council: normally *O salutaris hostia*, but for Masses of the Blessed Virgin, *Ave verum Corpus*, and for Requiem Masses, *Pie Jesu Domine*, "Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem," three times, with the addition of "sempiternam" the third time. The motu proprio of St. Pius X provided only one place for a motet in the solemn Mass—after the Benedictus—evidently an elevation motet.

Instrumental music was also used at the elevation; in Rome at St. Peter's silver trumpets were played in place of the Benedictus, and Masses explicitly written for St. Peter's are often lacking a Benedictus, because of this practice. In the Baroque, organ pieces were played at the elevation, often in a chromatic style to express the height of devotion. The elevation toccatas of Frescobaldi, for instance, are in a chromatic style quite distinct from that of his other toccatas.

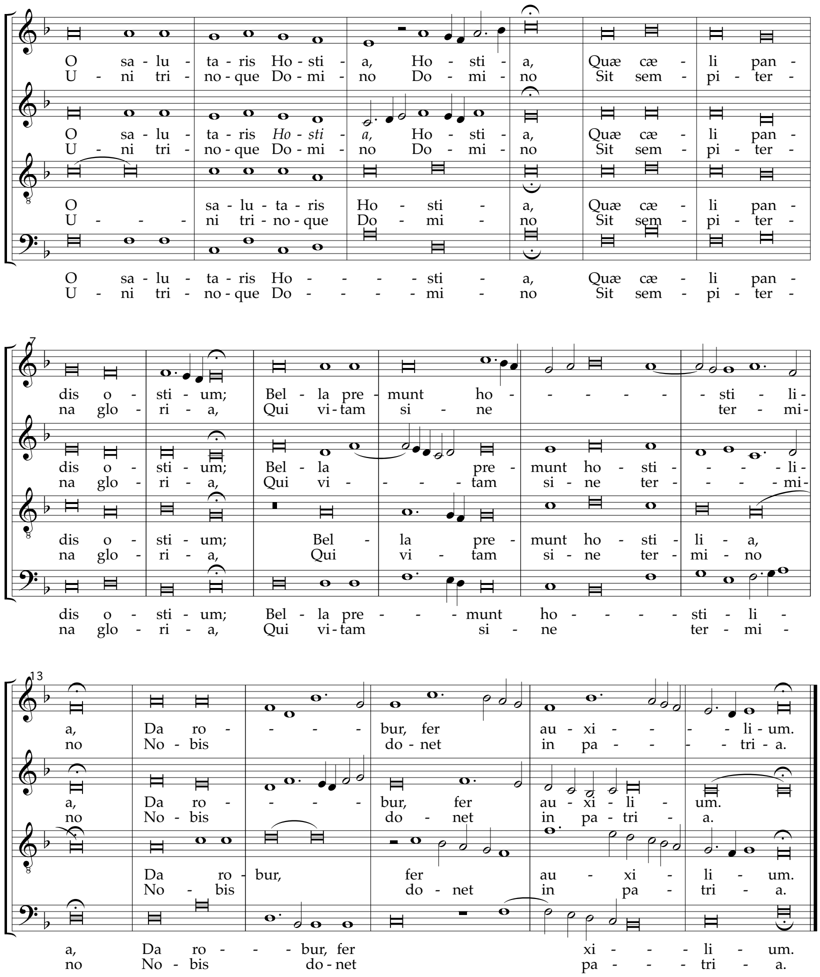
La Rue's *O salutaris hostia* plays upon the lauda style: it begins in a nearly homophonic manner, but with a slightly decorative addition between soprano and alto at the repetition of "hostia." The second phrase is completely homophonic; but with the third phrase, "Bella premunt hostilia," the voices begin to develop some independence, passing around among them a brief pattern of a dotted whole note followed by a pair of quarter notes. The fourth phrase begins as if the homophony had been recovered, but in only a measure's time the voices begin to move independently, and on the words "fer auxilium" engage in four-part imitation, a stepwise descending pattern, which at the time-interval of a whole note makes parallel tenths and sixths leading directly to the final cadence. The juxtaposition of simple, direct homophony at the beginning of each phrase with varying degrees of emerging polyphony gives this piece an elegance and simplicity that suits the object of its devotion.

I would take a speed of about 60 per whole note, and maintain a very regular tempo, aside from the fermatas at the ends of phrases. This regular tempo is necessary, particularly in the quick ornamental flourish at m. 3 in the soprano and alto, and at the imitation in the last phrase. But also the strictly homophonic parts demand particular attention: they require a perfect simultaneous declamation. I ask singers to focus upon speaking the text exactly together as they sing the piece. Likewise in the homophonic sections, the accent of the text must play a role: in the phrase, "Quae caéli pándis óstium," the accented syllables should determine the rhythm of the phrase, rather than following a measure-based rhythm; La Rue makes this quite feasible by giving the accented syllables generally higher pitches. The final phrase is the *pièce de résistance* of this little work; out of a homophonic phrase-beginning emerges a system of imitation in descending half-notes, six entries in less than two measures, on C, F, and B-flat. The beauty of this passage rests in the stepwise descending half-notes, which move through dissonances—every other note is a passing note (off the beat, approached and left by step). Ordinarily passing notes might be sung a little more lightly than the surrounding consonant notes, but in such passages as this, I take the opposite approach—I ask the singers to lean into the passing notes slightly, making their connection to the preceding and following consonances direct and smooth. This enlivens the passage and clarifies its contrapuntal structure.

There is an interesting question of *musica ficta*. Renaissance performance practice requires unwritten accidentals to be supplied according to rules, one of which is that an augmented fourth or a diminished fifth, especially with the lowest sounding note, should be made perfect. This seems to be the case in m. 12, where the E-natural in the bass comes against a B-flat in the tenor. But if the E is flatted in the bass, then so must the E in the alto be flatted, and the resulting sonority has always seemed to me to be somewhat alien. The rules do allow such a diminished interval if it is resolved correctly, and that may be the case here. I have experimented with every possible way of avoiding this diminished fifth, and have found none that is satisfactory, and thus have retained the questionable interval; at this point I have become quite accustomed to it and have no objection to it.

O Salutaris Hostia

Pierre de La Rue



The text is, of course, a standard text for Benediction. If the congregation sings *Tantum ergo*, then it is quite suitable for the choir to sing *O salutaris hostia*. This text is the fifth stanza of St. Thomas Aquinas's *Verbum supernum prodiens*, the hymn for Matins of Corpus Christi. La Rue's setting comprises the text of

only one stanza. This lasts about a minute and a quarter. I have added the conventional second stanza, the doxology of the original hymn, which gives a piece lasting two and a half minutes.

When this piece is sung well in tune and with a stable rhythm, it can have an extraordinary effect upon the listeners; it is not the effect of stunned surprise or exaltation, but rather of being turned to true devotion and adoration.

22

THE MASSES OF WILLIAM BYRD

The Ordinary of the Mass was a principal genre in the Renaissance, and most Renaissance composers gave it considerable attention. The masses of William Byrd are among the most distinguished of the genre. The first polyphonic mass I ever sang was William Byrd's Mass for Five Voices. The first polyphonic mass I ever sang with the St. Ann Choir—which I now direct—was Byrd's Mass for Three Voices. This choir has sung the Mass for Four Voices at least twice a year for the last thirty-five years and the others occasionally. Having sung the Four-Voice Mass most frequently, I have always been surprised when singing one of the others to notice the close resemblances; I have often thought, "Why, this is the same mass with different notes." While this may be a slight exaggeration, it points to the unique position of the masses among Byrd's works in striking contrast with the works of the other prominent Renaissance composers. While Palestrina wrote over a hundred, Lasso nearly eighty, Victoria nearly twenty, and Josquin at least fifteen, Byrd wrote only three: simply one for each number of voices, three, four, and five. Why? Why not the amazing variety of the continental

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composers? What difference does it make? What sense does the difference make?

The Renaissance Mass Ordinary is a paradoxical genre; it is comprised of diverse texts bound by a single musical style. This was not the case in the Middle Ages. At that time, each piece of the ordinary was a separate liturgical genre: litanies—Kyrie and Agnus Dei, hymns—Gloria and Sanctus, and profession of belief—Credo. And each of these genres had its own musical style. These movements, whose texts remained constant from service to service, were most likely to have been set to polyphonic music for practical reasons: the settings could be used on any day in contrast with the Propers of the Mass, which could be sung on only one or at most a few days of the year. Yet, there was little integration among the parts of the ordinary when they were set to polyphonic music. Even the mass of Guillaume de Machaut was probably compiled from separately existing movements; some of its movements were based upon chant melodies and some were not, and those that were used different chants for each movement.

In the Renaissance, in contrast, there was a sense of artistic integration among those movements distinguished by polyphonic setting. The five movements of the ordinary were now composed as the pillars of the whole service, integrating and ordering the entire liturgy. They were in a consistent style from movement to movement, despite the diversity of their texts. Being all by a single composer, their consistent style created a kind of rondo-like musical structure in alternation with the other elements of the service, which were mostly chants in diverse styles and modes, written at varying times over the whole history. Since these mass compositions were numerous—Palestrina alone wrote 103—and were all on the same set of texts, there had to be a principle of differentiation. To imagine the difficulty for a composer setting about to write his hundredth mass upon the same texts, yet composing something original that had not been done in any of the previous settings, is to realize the necessity of a principle of differentiation between such numerous masses. How could each of these masses have a unique style and expression? The principle of differentiation was the use of borrowed material: each mass was based upon

musical material—chants or polyphonic pieces, sacred or secular—that had its source outside the mass itself, ensuring that the mass based upon it sounded fundamentally different from others based upon other borrowed materials.

There were striking differences in this use of borrowed materials between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, what they borrowed and why they borrowed it. These differences relate to a difference between the aesthetics of the two centuries, a difference of the attitude to affect, or the emotion expressed by the music. For composers of the fifteenth century—such as Dufay, Ockeghem, and Josquin Des Prez—the musical work is a microcosm of all of creation. The affect of the music is essentially that of wonder, upon the perception of universal order. Universal order is, in the medieval tradition, hierarchical; the parts of the music are ordered by the tenor voice having priority: the borrowed material was the melody carried by the tenor as an authoritative source. The focus of this aesthetic is upon an objective order, and the resulting affect might be called a universal one.

For composers of the sixteenth century on the continent, there was a remarkable shift in music, which is the result of humanism: the more human aspects of the sacred are now represented by focusing upon the quality of the affective response rather than upon the nature of the mystery which elicited it. This can be seen in the dominant school of spirituality of the period, such as in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola—the self-conscious cultivation of a religious affect, albeit as a response to objective aspects of faith. The result of the cultivation of affectiveness of music is that texts are chosen which are capable of expressing intense affections. In the sacred (though not liturgical) realm, these included laments of Old-Testament fathers upon the death of their sons. There may not have been any explicit theology behind the choice of these texts; rather I suppose that the rationale of their being set to music was not primarily theological, but artistic, i.e., expressive: they were the means of expressing intense emotion. Secular music of the same period, likewise, found in the subject of human love, particularly disappointed or frustrated love, the occasion for the most beautiful and intense expression. These intense emotions found a secondary point of

expression in setting the mass; the parody mass essentially borrowed the music of a piece with another text, whose expression it was; there was always the possibility that in the mass text something was reflected, sometimes indirectly, by the music of the model. This was essentially a manneristic aesthetic, and is represented by the preponderance of the masses of Palestrina, Victoria, and Lasso, the most prominent mass composers of Byrd's era.

Byrd had been the heir of such an affective tradition. He had appropriated the mode of lamentation in many of the works of the three volumes of *Cantiones sacrae* in extended, expansive, and effective expression. But here, the purpose was not the same: the cultivation of intense affects served at one and the same time an aesthetic purpose and as well as an expression of the lamentable situation of Catholics in England, even in particular relation to sacred music. It is thought that many of these *cantiones* were written for those who remembered the splendid location of excellent polyphony in the traditional Latin liturgy, cultivated as late as the final years of the reign of Mary; now they were reduced to singing elegant works of vocal chamber music set to sacred texts, but at the same time lamenting the loss of the proper location of such polyphony.

But something happened when Byrd wrote masses. These were now for liturgical celebration. Some think the Mass for Four Voices was performed by 1586; in any case it was published in 1592–93. In 1593, after decades of being a member of the Chapel Royal, he moved to Stondon Massey, where the masses would have been sung liturgically for the community of Catholics. The Mass for Three Voices was published in 1593–94 and that for Five in 1594–95.[1] Thus Byrd's masses occupy a unique historical position. Palestrina, Lasso, and Victoria composed for major institutional patrons, in the context of the self-conscious cultivation of artistry and of splendor, in each case accompanied by considerable piety as well. Still, the name of the game was variety, a kind of dazzling splendor of a different mass for every special occasion. I do not mean to suggest that a Renaissance ruler, such as the Duke

[1] Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 188–89.

of Bavaria, Lasso's longtime patron, comes in for any blame—to support the talents of one of the world's greatest artists, employed for making divine worship beautiful, is one of the best things he can have spent his money for. How does this compare with how our present-day governments spend our money? I contend, remarkably well. To give the liturgy the optimum human splendor was to approach the divine through the chain of being—i.e., the highest artistic form, the mass, brought the worshipper closer to the highest artist, the Creator.

Byrd had known such a context in the Chapel Royal, but the context of his masses was entirely different, more intimate and more focused. For the small community of Catholics in Elizabethan England, the Mass was a matter of their identity. They were celebrating the Mass authorized by the Council of Trent—not the old Sarum Rite—as recusants, Catholics who made great sacrifices to remain so. Their principal purpose was to celebrate this Mass, always the same in its essentials, in contrast with continental courts and cathedrals, where the essence of the thing was secure and taken for granted. Thus Byrd's masses stand quite apart from the continental tradition in several ways. First, he is writing the first Mass Ordinary in England in thirty years. Second, while he looked to his English predecessors, John Taverner in particular, but also Thomas Tallis and John Sheppard, he did not base his masses upon any systematically used borrowed material. In this he must have been conscious of a subordinate English tradition, the plain-style masses of Taverner, Tye, Sheppard, and Tallis, which cultivate a more direct and simple expression of the text than the festal masses of these composers, as do Byrd's masses. Finally, Byrd sets the entire Mass text; English composers rarely set the Kyrie, and their settings of the Credo omitted a substantial part of the text. This is clearly a reorientation of Tridentine usages on Byrd's part and a certain departure from English traditions.

But the most important difference lies in the composer's relation to the text. Byrd famously spoke of his relation to the texts of sacred music:

> In these words, as I have learned by trial, there is such a concealed and hidden power that to one thinking

> upon things divine and diligently and earnestly pondering them, all the fittest numbers occur as if of themselves and freely offer themselves to the mind which is not indolent or inert.[2]

With his three masses, each for a different number of voices, he needed no further principle of differentiation; rather, I would suggest, each mass is the ideal setting of this text for this number of voices, in the manner which he describes. There is no systematic use of borrowed material; rather, each mass addresses its text in the most direct, succinct, and yet expressive way. These masses show clear evidence that Byrd was aware that they might be sung many times: their construction and expression is so tight and concentrated that they repay repeated performance. My experience in singing the *Gradualia* bears this out.[3] The pieces of the *Gradualia*, mostly to be sung once a year, as beautiful as they are, do not have the intense concentration that the masses do: they can be sung once a year and retain great interest. The masses, however, can be sung quite a bit more frequently and sustain the repetition very well. The most extensive and intensive discussion of these works is in Joseph Kerman's *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd*.[4] In what follows I will address a few specific points about the masses that relate to Byrd's treatment of the genre as a whole. The discussion may best be followed with access to score and recording.[5]

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[2] William Byrd, *Gradualia*, "Dedications and Foreword," in Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History*, revised edition, Leo Treitler, ed. (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 378.

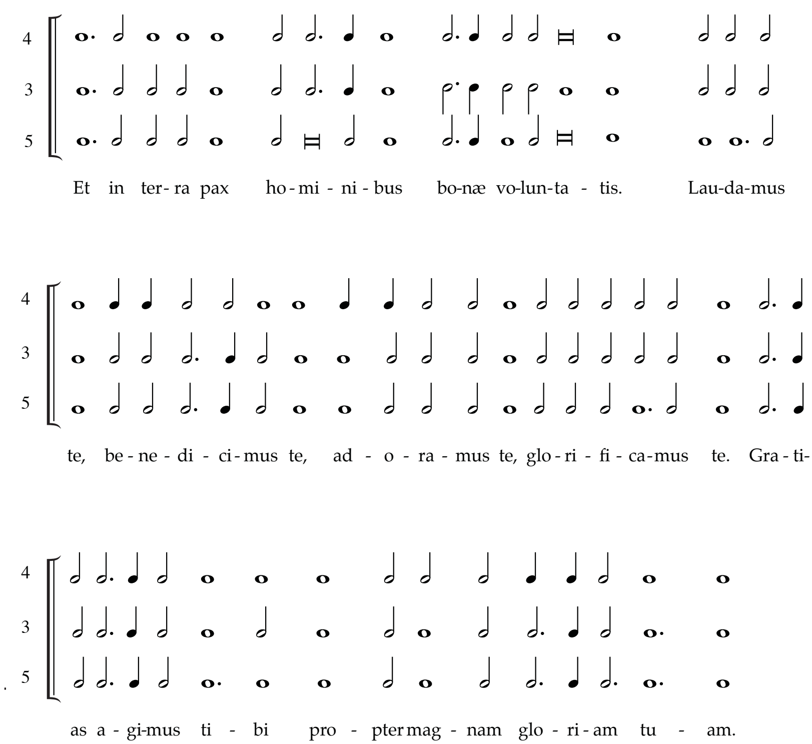
[3] Kerry McCarthy directed a cycle of the twelve major feasts provided by the *Gradualia* for celebrated Latin Masses on the proper days, one singer to a part, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Palo Alto, California, in the Jubilee Year 2000.

[4] Chapter 4, "The Mass," (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 188–215.

[5] Scores for the masses can be found in *The Byrd Edition*, Philip Brett, ed., Vol. 4, *The Masses* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1981); scores of all three masses are also available online at www.cpdl.org. Many recordings are available; among them is: William Byrd, *The Three Masses*, Byrd edition, Vol. 5; The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director (London: ASV, 2000; CD GAU 206 ASV).

Byrd's focus upon the text can be seen in the manner in which the music represents the rhythm of the text. Especially in the movements with longer texts, the Gloria and Credo, much of the setting is syllabic—a single note per syllable: characteristically a phrase is set one note per syllable, with the accented syllables receiving the longer notes and higher pitches; the last accent of the phrase then receives a short melisma leading to a cadence. That Byrd focused upon the rhythm of the text may be illustrated by comparison of the rhythm of the beginning of his three settings of the Gloria. My experience of "the same piece with different notes" is shown in how similar the rhythms for all three settings are.

DECLAMATION OF THE GLORIA IN BYRD MASSES
FOR FOUR, THREE, AND FIVE VOICES



The sensitivity to text is also seen in the rhetorical treatment of phrases. For example, in the Gloria of the Four-Voice Mass, beginning with "Laudamus te," each of the four short acclamations is stated in a very brief duet, alternating low and high voices; at first it seems scarcely an adequate expression of these potentially expressive texts. However, upon the fourth acclamation, "Glorificamus te," the rhetoric begins: the lower voices answer back the same text, and then, beginning with the highest voice, all enter in imitation leading to a strongly emphatic four-voice cadence. This cumulative ending pulls together the four acclamations in a splendid climax that gloriously emphasizes the culminating phrase, "We give thee glory."

Another highly expressive rhetorical treatment of the text is at the beginning of the Agnus Dei of the Mass for Four Voices. This is a duet between soprano and alto in close imitation; such close imitation is essential to the rhetoric of the duet: after an initial somewhat conventional imitation (the head motive for the whole mass, identical with the first measures of the Gloria), the alto rises to a high note on "qui tollis," after which the soprano imitates it a step higher and leads to the highest note so far in the passage; the alto begins "miserere nobis," upon its lowest note, repeating the phrase twice, each time at a higher pitch, while the soprano imitates this at a higher pitch as well. This beautiful and highly rhetorical duet establishes a point of departure for the whole movement, which then has its greatest cumulation at its ending.

The basic language of the masses is imitation—each voice taking a subject in turn, but this technique is used in extraordinarily varied ways and often in very concentrated ways. An example is the Kyrie of the Four-Voice Mass:

> It begins with a subject and a tonal answer—a fourth is answered by a fifth, the two comprising a complete octave, the theoretical range of the mode, or tone. The alto begins, answered by the soprano; the tenor then answers, but before the bass can enter the soprano states the tonal answer, a fifth lower than its original entrance; then the bass enters, giving the illusion of five voices in imitation, each entering at a measure's distance. Once the bass has entered, though,

> the other voices begin to enter at quicker successions, creating a stretto with fourteen entrances in the course of the whole ten-measure section. These entrances have all been on the tonally correct beginning notes, D and G.
>
> The Christe introduces elements of considerable variety: the second voice enters after only a whole note, the third after a half, but the fourth after two wholes. This eccentric time interval is corroborated by eccentric pitches: D–G–D–G–G–C–E-flat–B-flat–B-flat–F–B-flat–F, but cadencing back to D.
>
> The final Kyrie has a double subject, tenor and soprano beginning by each stating its own subject; there follows a separation of the two subjects, each being stated separately and on a variety of pitches, for a total of twenty-two entrances in the course of eighteen measures, a splendid proliferation of melody in counterpoint.

Byrd's use of imitation is highly original and varied, sometimes even illusory. The Agnus Dei of the Four-Voice Mass shows a long-term use of illusion in imitation. It begins with the two upper voices in close imitation for the first complete sentence of the text. The second sentence is taken first by the two lower voices, also in close imitation, at the time-interval of only a half-note. But after three wholenotes' duration, the soprano enters, causing the listener in surprise to re-evaluate the composer's strategy: instead of a texture of paired duets—two high voices answered by two lower voices—there is now a texture of increasing voices—two voices answered by three voices. Then the outer voices answer the alto's entrance with an imitation in parallel tenths that proceeds for four-and-a-half whole notes, long enough for the listener to assume that this will be the texture for this sentence; but, again, there is a surprise: the fourth voice enters also in imitation, and this then leads to one of the most elegant suspensions, effectively depicting the peaceful state for which the text prays.

Each of the three masses has its own character and its own unique features, many of which are explored by Joseph Kerman. The basic differences derive from the difference in the number of voices, which was decisive for Byrd's decisions concerning texture.

The texture of each mass optimizes the number of voices and what is possible with that number. Thus the Four-Voice Mass has as a principal texture paired duets: soprano and alto sing in close imitation, and this is followed by tenor and bass taking up the same material in their own duet. Four-voice imitation is prevalent, occasionally in juxtaposition with familiar style—simultaneous text in simultaneous rhythms, sometimes called homophony, as, for example, "Gratias agimus tibi," following the imitative section on "Glorificamus te," which then gradually breaks out into imitation on "propter magnam gloriam tuam."

The Mass for Three Voices is in what I would call a "risky" texture: three equal voices in full triadic sonority. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, three-voice writing was the norm, but it was not in equal voices: soprano and tenor formed a self-sufficient, consonant, mainly conjunct counterpoint, while the contratenor supplied the third tone that usually completed the triad; the contratenor skips around picking off the notes for the triad, not obliged to maintain a conjunct melodic style. In Byrd's three-part writing, however, all three voices have melodic coherence and proceed in full triads. Anyone who has studied harmony knows that four voices contain the means for good voice-leading, for doubling one of the notes of the triad allows some flexibility in how the voices move from chord to chord. In only three voices, there is no leeway, every note has to count, and every progression is naked and unprotected. In my opinion, of the masses, that for three voices represents the greatest compositional skill, since it works within such strict limitations. The inclusion of imitation poses further challenge, but the solution lies in the use of parallel tenths, usually between the outer voices. The harmonization of these by a third voice, then, makes possible smooth voice-leading and full triads. Anyone can do it. Hardly anyone can do it in a fashion that is interesting for more than a few phrases, not to mention for a whole mass, anyone, that is, except for Byrd.

The Five-Voice Mass has the greatest contrapuntal leeway, and being the last composed, benefited from the greatest experience in setting the text. Here reduced textures are more often in three voices, and the five-voice sections, in a couple of notable passages, are supremely forceful. Two of these passages are on

"Dominus Deus Sabaoth" in the Sanctus and on the beginning of the third Agnus Dei. In both of these instances the full five-voice chordal texture is expressed very forcefully and constitutes a dramatic high point of the movement.

The overall shape of each mass also represents a sensitive approach to the texts. In the absence of the usual borrowed material to integrate the five movements, a traditional technique is still used—the head motive: the movements begin with the same melodic or contrapuntal figure, which serves to signify the integration of the movements. The Sanctus, however, stands outside this scheme, and this is part of its sensitive treatment. In a very important sense, the Sanctus is the centerpiece of the Mass liturgically. It is during the Sanctus and Benedictus that traditionally the Canon of the Mass is said silently and that the consecration of the Sacrament occurs, a most sacred and hieratic moment. The hieratic is best represented by something archaic, and this applies first of all to the text of the Sanctus itself. The text harks back to the Old Testament (Isaiah 6:3) and to the most hieratic phenomenon, the Seraphim before the face of God crying out each to the other "Holy, Holy, Holy!" The Three- and Five-Voice Masses begin the Sanctus with a reference to a *cantus firmus* style—one voice holds long notes while the others embellish it. This derives from the fifteenth-century technique of setting the authoritative borrowed melody in the tenor in long notes, a cantus firmus. For Byrd it is only an allusion, but it is enough to recall the style of past generations, thus alluding to something ancient, and in turn evoking a hieratic effect. The Four-Voice Mass does a similar thing by imitating the Sanctus of John Taverner's *Meane Mass*, by the 1590s a work from the distant past.

Byrd's three masses are thus a unique phenomenon in the genre, being original and direct expressions of the Mass texts, eschewing the conventions of continental composers who differentiated one mass from another by borrowing musical material from outside the Mass. Rather they meet the practical need for a mass for three different voice dispositions, but they do so with the highest art and with the most loving attention to the text of the Mass itself, so that they remain perennial standards of the liturgical repertory.

23

WILLIAM BYRD'S ART OF MELODY

Melody, of all the aspects of music is difficult to talk about, even though it is the most apparent aspect of a piece of music—it is what we come away with humming, and it is generally what we recall first about a piece. Still it is like St. Augustine's description of time: I know what it is until you ask me to define it. We recognize melodies, but we are sometimes hard put to say why they are effective. Thus, melody is not as well-studied as other aspects of music. A subject search of the library catalogue at Stanford yielded these results: about seven hundred fifty books under harmony, about three hundred under counterpoint, but only twenty or twenty-five under melody. Perhaps melody is in need of further study.

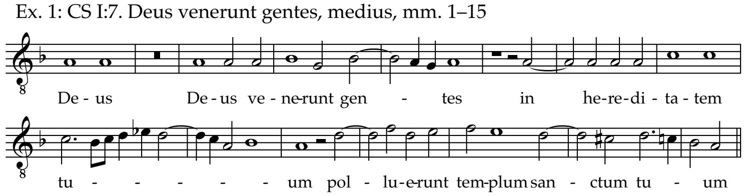
The two volumes of *Cantiones Sacrae* (1589, 1591) by William Byrd provide a fruitful basis for the study of one composer's melodic art, principally because these works show a striking polarity of affect—described in the period as "grave vs. merrie," and because Byrd makes very effective setting of his texts. I have addressed the question of affect in the essay "Grave and Merrie, Major and Minor: Expressive Paradoxes in Byrd's *Cantiones*

This chapter first appeared in *A Byrd Celebration: First Ten Years of the Portland William Byrd Festival*, edited by Richard Turbet (Richmond, Va.: Church Music Association of America, 2008).

Sacrae, 1589," showing that Byrd assimilated the lamenting affect of the Phrygian mode into the Aeolian, and considering certain anomalous relations of mode and affect: major-mode lamentations derive from the plainsong melody for the Lamentations of Jeremiah; the upbeat Phrygian relates to a particular Phrygian usage, such as the Phrygian Alleluia melodies in the Easter season.[1]

Consider two contrasting melodies from Byrd's collections. In the first, *Deus venerunt gentes* [See Example 1], the opening segment of the melody sets the tone for this substantial and very grave work. It begins with several syllables reiterated on a single pitch before rising a half step with a minor third below it to express the accented syllables of the text, ending with a return to A via B-flat (mm. 1–5). It proceeds with more reiteration of the same pitch, and a rise of a minor third to the next important accent; the following accent bears a melisma rising another minor third, descending again to A through B-flat (mm. 6–11); the third segment shifts upward to D with a minor third above it, placing the important accent on the F, cadencing to D and then descending again to A through B-flat (mm. 11–15). Each segment carries some of the same elements: the minor third and the descent to a Phrygian cadence. Yet each one contains a substantial increase over the previous segment, contributing to a dynamic structure. Still, the range is limited, expressive of the lamenting character of the work. Likewise, the rather slow development of the whole subject indicates to the listener that it will be a work on a large scale.

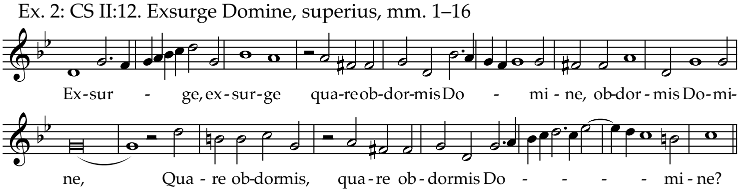
Ex. 1: CS I:7. Deus venerunt gentes, medius, mm. 1–15



[1] CF. below, pp. 311–319; the Phrygian mode is that mode whose final is E, giving it a most pungent affect, particularly in its unique melodic cadence: the Phrygian cadence is a descent of a half step to the final, while the cadences of the other modes are a descent of a whole step.

The second melody, *Exsurge Domine* [Example 2], forms a striking contrast with the first. This melody begins with a skip upwards and after a brief turn, continues upwards in a quick scale; a repeat of the initial word sets its accent off by resolving it downwards by a half step (mm. 1–3). The question, "quare obdormis" (why are you sleeping?) is repeated, leading to "Domine," which is emphasized by a leap of a sixth (mm. 4–9); the third statement of the question begins a descent of a whole octave, and then on "Domine" another scalewise ascent rises through the whole octave plus a half step (mm. 10–16).[2] The wide-ranging motion together with the quick reiteration of the question contributes to the ebullient sense of urgency that suffuses the piece.

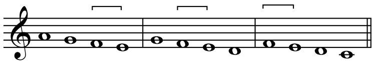
Ex. 2: CS II:12. Exsurge Domine, superius, mm. 1–16



The differences between narrow-ranging and wide-ranging, between stepwise and skipwise, and their affective connotations—often the contrast of "grave and merrie"—are characteristic for Byrd, but they can be further explored by outlining several ways in which he constructs melodies. Generally his melody has a characteristic beginning gesture, clearly articulated, and then that gesture is expanded or elaborated upon in the course of the setting of the first phrase. Likewise, most of his melodic gestures focus upon a half-step as an expressive element, either within the basic interval or added to it. Thus the distinction between the three species of tetrachord, differing by where the half step falls [see Example 3], is central to how Byrd forms his melodies, but the half step can also decorate an interval species as it did in *Exsurge*, and as is done in the contrapuntal beginning of *Defecit in*

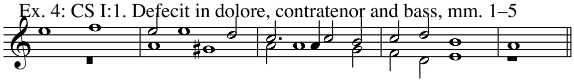
[2] It is interesting to note that this range is the perfect plagal ambitus defined by theorists, which includes the whole octave plus one note above it.

Ex. 3: Three tetrachords with different positions of the half step



dolore [Example 4]. Here complementary entrances of the voices move to a half step in opposite directions. Or, a double half step

Ex. 4: CS I:1. Defecit in dolore, contratenor and bass, mm. 1–5



can shape a single melody [Example 5].

Ex. 5: CS I:8. Domine tu jurasti, tenor, mm. 1–5



Byrd's most stark beginning is that on a single pitch [Example 6]. Here are the words of the centurion in the gospel, "Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." The first word, "Domine," set to a single pitch, very slowly represents the rhythm of the word and by its single pitch the most discreet approach to the Lord (mm. 2–4). It is then repeated, rising briefly, adding an element of intensity, but immediately falling to a much lower pitch, a gesture of evident humility (mm. 5–7); what follows, "non sum dignus" (I am not worthy), reiterates the gesture, rising to the same note on the accented syllable and then descending through a scalewise passage to the same bottom note,

Ex. 6: CS II:15. Domine, non sum dignus, superius, mm. 2–10



now a much more elaborate gesture of humility (mm. 8–10). The simple rhythm of the word on a single pitch has been the basis of a progressive elaboration.

A similar stark melody serves a similar purpose in *Infelix ego* [Example 7]. Here, after eleven minutes of mainly contrapuntal

Ex. 7: CS II:16. Infelix ego, superius, mm. 233–239



buildup, commenting on Psalm 50, the text of the beginning of the psalm is quoted for the first time in repeated notes and familiar style,[3] with only a half-step inflection on the accent of the text: the passage is set off by a silence before and after it, and after repeating it intensely, it leads to the object of address, "Deus." This setting a passage off in simultaneous text surrounded by rests was familiar to Renaissance composers, and they saved it for just the most poignant moments, naming it "noema." The passage comes at the crux of the whole piece—the citation of the beginning of the text of the psalm upon which the piece has been the commentary. It is one of the most sophisticated rhetorical devices: to create a build-up to a climax and to provide as its culmination, not a great climactic peak but a point of utter simplicity. Of course, it is not simple at all; the psychological calculation to place it correctly and to gage its extent is masterly.

Another very discreet beginning melody type is a circling melody. In a separate setting of the beginning of Psalm 50, the text is given in familiar style, with the top voice singing this melody [Example 8]. The melody simply circles around the beginning pitch, accommodating the accent of the text.

Ex. 8: CS II:13. Miserere mei Deus, superius, mm. 1–5

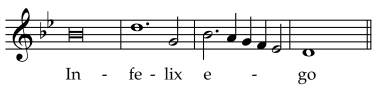


The very beginning of *Infelix ego* uses quite a different circling melody and to a different effect. This impressive twelve-minute work begins with the note upon which it will end, B-flat, circling around it in a four-note figure [Example 9]. But the circling actually outlines a G-minor triad; this is followed by a

[3] "Familiar style" is a texture in which all the voices sing the text simultaneously, as opposed to contrapuntal styles, in which each voice takes the text in turn; it is sometimes also called "chordal style."

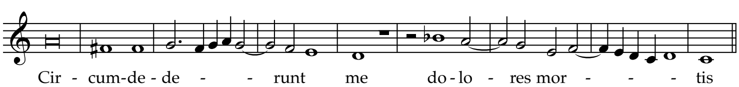
descent downward, filling in nearly the whole octave from its top note and reinforcing the effect of the minor at the very beginning of this piece, which then ends in the major, thus setting a problematic modal context for the whole piece.

Ex. 9: CS II:16. Infelix ego, superius, mm. 3-6



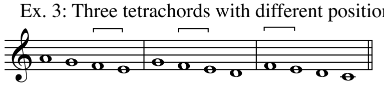
Yet another circling melody represents an idea in the text: On "Circumdederunt me" (the sorrows of death encompassed me about) [Example10], the melody encircles its focal pitch, G, (mm. 5–7); the sorrows are then represented by a descent that begins with a half step above the beginning note of the melody (mm. 10–13).

Ex. 10: CS II:9. Circumdederunt me, superius, mm. 5–13

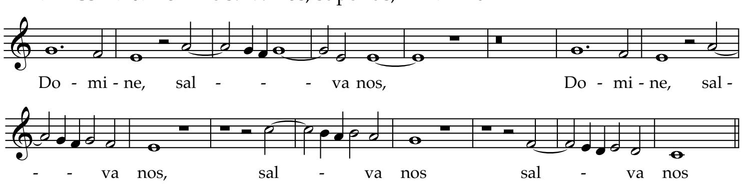


The next most discreet melodic beginning is a tetrachordal beginning, i.e., a beginning in which the range of the melody is limited to four notes. There are three possible species of tetrachord, depending upon where the half step is [see again, Example 3]. *Domine, salva nos* [Example 11] begins with a melody which descends by a third, leaps up for the plea, "salva," and descends by a fourth, a Phrygian fourth, with the half step at the bottom. The first statement of the melody in the soprano skips down to its

Ex. 3: Three tetrachords with different positions of the half step



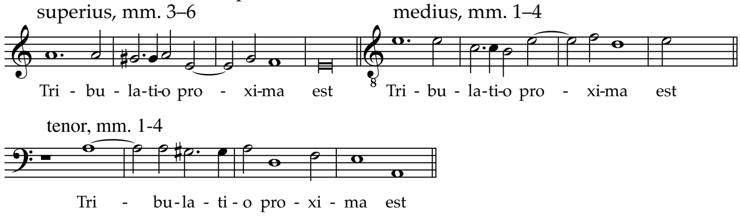
Ex. 11 CS II:20. Domine salva nos, superius, mm. 1–16



bottom note on "salva nos," avoiding the half step (mm. 1–4), but the second statement includes the half step (mm. 7–10). This tetrachordal melody is then elaborated by changing the species of tetrachord and shifting the fourth upward (mm. 11–13), and then downward (mm. 14–16), thus gradually expanding its range to the whole octave.

In constructing melodic beginnings with tetrachords, Byrd very often makes pointed use of the half step. In *Tribulatio proxima est* [Example 12], the subject places a half step at both the top and bottom of the tetrachord. Byrd is quite unlike continental composers such as Palestrina, however, in treating melodies in imitation. When the voices take the melody in turn, Palestrina's technique is to keep them quite consistent, and this is expressive of a certain kind of classicism rightly admired in Palestrina. But Byrd very often makes small variations in each entering voice, as here; while the top voice sings the fourth with the half step at both top and bottom (superius, mm. 3–6), the next voice down sings a straight fourth with the half step naturally occurring at the bottom, but adds a half step above the top note (medius, mm. 1–4). The next voice circles around the bottom note of the fourth, ultimately expanding its range to the whole octave (tenor, mm. 1–4).

Ex. 12: CS II:5. Tribulatio proxima est,



Sometimes the Phrygian fourth is expanded to create what I call a Phrygian descent: a stepwise descent from the reciting note, C, to the final E, which then has the fourth as the concluding part of the descent. In *Domine exaudi* [Example 13], the basic fourth subject (mm. 9–11) is extended to include this descent (mm.

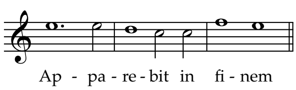
Ex. 13: CS II:6. Domine exaudi orationem meam, mm. 9–15



12–15). This gives eloquent emphasis upon the object of the text, "orationem meam."

Another way of emphasizing the half step in a fourth is to put it in a prominent position at the top of the fourth. *Apparebit in finem* [Example 14] uses such a half step to emphasize the accented syllable, "fi."

Ex. 14: CS II:7. Apparebit in finem, superius, mm. 5–7



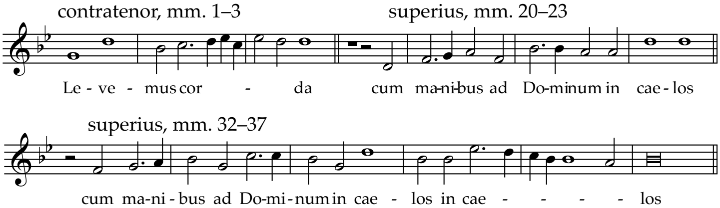
A very expressive tetrachordal melody is used in *Haec dicit Dominus* [Example 15], where the introductory sentence, "Thus saith the Lord," is articulated with a fourth with a half step at the top descending to a half step at the bottom; the whole pattern is then expanded by touching on the half step below the beginning note and skipping up a third, setting the rest of the melody up a step, incorporating in the process four different half steps. These are two statements in familiar style and are obviously there for harmonic reasons, but they create a point of departure for what follows. Each of three successive statements begins on A; the second takes an ascending fourth with a half step at the top, a clear alteration of the tonality that has preceded. The third expands the range by rising the whole fourth above the A, also with a half step at the top. Thus the sequence has been a fourth rising to B-flat, then to C, then to D.

Ex. 15: CS II:10. Haec dicit Dominus, superius, mm. 1–13



Whole triads are used for melodies, and are especially effective when they have a half step above them, as in *Levemus corda nostra* [Example 16]. The rising character of the text is well expressed by the upward leap of a fifth, eventually superceded by

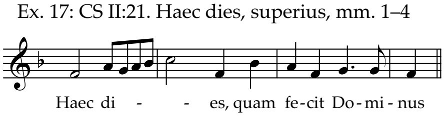
Ex. 16: CS II:10. Levemus corda



the rising half step on "corda" (hearts, mm. 1–3). This rising motion is expanded in the next phrases by adding to the rising triad plus half step a leap upward at "ad Dominum in caelos," filling out the whole octave suitably expressing "heavens" by its highest note (mm. 20–23). Subsequently, the sopranos add yet another half step to that high note for the highest note of the piece (mm. 32–37). Thus the height of heavens is the ultimate goal of the soprano part, even of the whole melody.

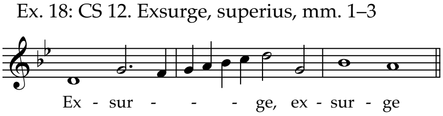
Rising fifths are also used with the additional feature that they carry swift scalewise motion upward to express some kind of upward ascent or general exaltation. *Haec dies*, the Easter text, expresses the exultation of the day through a triad elaborated by quick, stepwise motion [Example 17]. *Exsurge, Domine*, however, uses a similar figure, this time in a minor mode, expressing a kind

Ex. 17: CS II:21. Haec dies, superius, mm. 1–4



of urgency, to exhort the Lord to arise, an Advent theme expressed by ascending a whole octave [Example 18]. This

Ex. 18: CS 12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 1–3



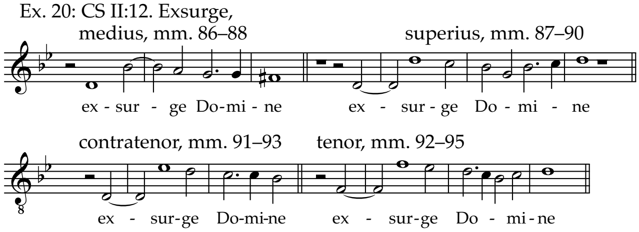
urgency is expanded upon throughout the piece: on "will you forget our poverty?" the same figure is stated on three successive pitches, insistently asking the Lord not to forget us [Example 19].

Ex. 19: CS II:12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 49–62



The piece is concluded by a recall of the first exhortation, “exsurge” (arise). Now what was at first a fourth leap up is extracted from its original scalewise ascent and becomes a series of bald leaps [Example 20], first a sixth (mm. 86–88), and then an octave (mm. 87–90), and then, unbelievably, a ninth (m. 91–93), and then even another octave, a third higher (m. 92–5).

Ex. 20: CS II:12. Exsurge,



A more gentle ascent greets the Blessed Virgin in *Salve Regina* [Example 21]. Here, the rising fifth touches upon the half step above more gently as an opening to this Marian greeting (mm. 1–3); this ascent is complemented by a further fifth above it, filling out the whole range of an octave (mm. 4–7). The paragraph closes by repeating the greeting *Salve Regina*, but now the same figure is extended to a seventh and elaborated, so that its effectiveness is heightened upon repetition (mm. 15–18).

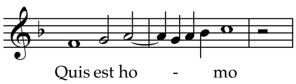
Ex. 21: CS II:4. Salve Regina,



Byrd’s treatment of text sometimes takes account of the grammatical mood of a phrase—its interrogative or imperative mood in

contrast to the normal declarative mood. *Quis est homo* begins with a question [Example 22]: This rising figure followed by a rest represents the kind of inflection we might give a question. Likewise,

Ex. 22: CS II:2. Quis est homo, superius, mm. 1–2



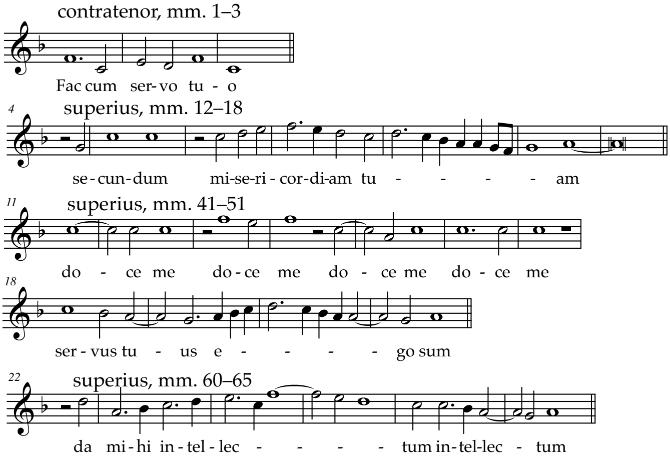
in *Exsurge, Domine* [Example 23], the half step gives a rising character suitable to a question; its reiteration throughout the texture also gives it a slightly nagging quality reminiscent of the questions of a child.

Ex. 23: CS II:12. Exsurge, superius, mm. 10–11



The imperative mood may be the basis for the distinction in melodies in *Fac cum servo tuo* [Example 24]; its first melody is a little jagged, "Fac cum servo tuo," (Deal with thy servant), separating every accented syllable by a leap before or after to a higher pitch, emphasizing the accented syllables as is appropriate to the imperative mood (mm. 1–3). The following melody, on "secundum misericoriam tuam" (according to thy mercy), is, in contrast,

Ex. 24: CS II:3. Fac cum servo tuo,
contratenor, mm. 1–3



entirely stepwise except for a leap to the first accented syllable (mm. 12–18). The next imperative in the same piece, "doce me," (teach me), is on an isolated reiterated phrase, either all on the same pitch, or mainly with skips (mm. 41–51). There follows "servus tuus" (thy servant), again stepwise, and finally, another imperative, "da mihi intellectum" (give me understanding), in a phrase set off by dotted rhythms (mm. 60–65). The whole shape of the first part of this piece is thus articulated by the alternation of imperatives with non-imperative phrases in contrasting melodic styles.

Perhaps the most imperative spot in the whole collection is in *Domine, salva nos* [Example 25]: here the imperative is for an imperative: "impera et fac Deus tranquilitatem," (command, and



create peace, O God!). The command to command is set to a repeated isolated word with an upward leap; "et fac Deus" is set to another upward leap, ultimately expanded to a sixth, comprising a whole octave (mm. 28–41), while the soprano makes an octave ascent on "et fac Deus" (mm. 40–41). The following series of imitations on "tranquilitatem" comes as a consoling contrast.

A larger-scale strategy for Byrd has to do with what I call a conversio. This is a rhetorical term which originally meant to run the changes through declensions or conjugations: e.g., "was . . . is now, and ever shall be," three tenses of the verb to be. Theorists of mode speak of a conversion, in which interval species are converted from one to another: A–G–F–E; E–Fsharp–Gsharp–A. Such a conversio occurs in *Levemus corda nostra* [Example 26], where "miserere" with a leap of a fifth plus a half step, a typical expression of pathos, is contrasted with "sed tu Domine," with an ascent through a chromatically raised step. "Sed tu" is prepared by

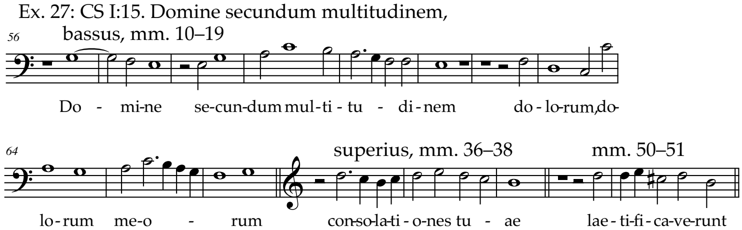
Ex. 26: CS II:10. Levemus corda,



one version, G–E-flat–F–G and converted to G–E-natural–F-sharp–G. This passage clarifies Byrd's meaning: in "but thou O Lord, have mercy," "thou O Lord" is given a remarkably positive aspect by this major sounding interval, confirming that the prayer is asked in confidence rather than fear.

The sequence of melodies in the course of a piece often creates a sense of progression of affect. Such is the case in *Domine secundum multitudinem* [Example 27]. It begins with a descending third, half step at the bottom (mm. 10–11); this is complemented by a rise to C, followed by the completion of a Phrygian descent (mm. 12–15). "Dolorum" is expressed by descending figures (mm. 16–18), but "consolationes" receives an impulse upward, expressing a more positive affect (mm. 36–38), and then "laetificantes" adds a new ascending half step to its quickening effect (mm. 50–51). Thus from the suggestion of lament at the beginning, a transformation takes place leading to a conclusion which is quite joyful.

Ex. 27: CS I:15. Domine secundum multitudinem,



I hope to have shown in Byrd's melodies a characteristic procedure, beginning with a rather short initial melodic gesture, clearly articulated, which is then expanded and elaborated. This gesture epitomizes the affect of the text, but in the process of

expansion is varied to convey a multitude of ways of differentiating the affect, and thus each work is different, though it expresses the basic affect of grave or merrie.

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GRAVE AND MERRIE, MAJOR AND MINOR: EXPRESSIVE PARADOXES IN BYRD'S *CANTIONES SACRAE*, 1589

In 1589, William Byrd began retrospective publication of his works with a collection of Latin sacred pieces, Book I of *Cantiones Sacrae*. It had been fourteen years since he and Thomas Tallis had published their joint collection, also entitled *Cantiones Sacrae*, in 1575. The character of the 1589 collection was somewhat different: as David Trendell has pointed out, the execution of Edmund Campion had taken place, and the Catholic community had acquired at once a sense of immanent danger and solidarity, expressed in the latter collection by texts which lament the state of the church, especially under the figure of the Holy City Jerusalem.

The 1575 collection had included seven lamentations upon the state of the soul due to personal sin, but only one which referred to the church collectively. In 1589, however, there were eight pieces of urgent collective imprecation, with only six referring to personal sin. There is in this collection, then, a heightened expression of the state of the community.

It is useful at this point to distinguish between *cantio sacra* and *motet*. "Motet" in the sixteenth century seems to have been used

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in England first by Thomas Morley in 1597, when he defined it as "a song made for the Church." This was something of a dilemma for Byrd at the time, for, being a Catholic, there was no church in which to sing the song. Indeed, the title page of 1575, *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (songs which by their texts are sacred) may represent a certain downplaying of setting Latin sacred texts at all, but the issue is more fundamental than that. Kerry McCarthy has pointed up the distinction: these *cantiones sacrae* are based upon texts which are freely chosen for their expressive values rather than being suited to liturgical or occasional genres. Of the sixteen cantiones in the 1589 collection, fully twelve have lamenting or beseeching texts; only three have texts of praise; one is of warning. So, in striking contrast with Byrd's later *Gradualia* of 1605 and 1607, whose texts were prescribed by the liturgy, the *cantiones Sacrae* have texts chosen out of intense personal and immediate concern—the affect of these texts and its expression in music is a principal *raison d'être*.

Indeed, the overwhelming impression of the 1589 collection is that of a dichotomy of affect, the contrast of "grave and merrie." Byrd's collection of secular songs the same year, which bore the explicit title, *Songs of Sundry Natures, Some of Gravity and Some of Mirth*, sets this dichotomy forth. Thomas Morley in the *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Music* (1597) picks up upon this distinction in his disquisition upon fitting music to its text. He says that you must "dispose your music according to the nature of the words which you are therein to express, as whatsoever matter it be which you have in hand, such a kind of music must you frame to it: if a merrie subject you must also make your music merrie. For it will be a great absurditie to use a sad harmony to a merrie matter, or a merrie harmony to a sad, lamentable, or tragical dittie."

He goes on to suggest other dichotomies, between sharp thirds and sixths and flat ones, between long and short notes, the use of suspensions, the use of diatonic notes or chromatic inflections, quickness or slowness of rhythmic motion, ascent or descent as visual depictions, and the careful representation of the proper lengths of the syllables. All of these elements enhance the gravity or mirth of pieces in Byrd's collection.

Though Morley only hints at modal expression, Byrd's collection shows a preponderance of minor-mode settings for grave texts and some major-mode settings for merrie texts [see Example 1]. Yet there are some problems: the glorious Jerusalem lament *Ne irascaris* is in the Ionian mode, while the exsultant *In resurrectione tua* ends in the Phrygian. Moreover, given the number of lamenting texts, why are there so few instances of the Phrygian mode? While it is true that Morley gives a summary account of Glarean's twelve-mode system later in his treatise, it must be remembered that Glarean himself, after having labored to demonstrate the expansion of the eight-mode system to twelve, admits that only three are in actual practical use, Ionian, Aeolian, and Phrygian, precisely the three Byrd uses. So the question I address here is what is the role of modality in the intense expression of affect we experience in the *Cantiones*? Traditional analysis has sought to classify a piece according to its principal mode, and this is possible for Byrd. But this principal mode is often only a backdrop for more varying and interesting usage. The beauty of the works most often consists in a free play of modal elements over and above the principal mode, and often designated in the period as *commixtio*, commixture of modes. And so I examine the pieces for the interplay of

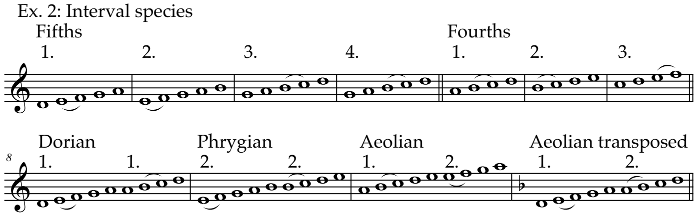
Ex. 1: Mode and Affect in *cantiones sacrae* 1589

#	Title	Sig.	Fin.	Mode	Affect
1.	Deficit in dolore	–	A	Aeolian	Lamentation with consolation
2.	Domine praestolamur	–	A	Aeolian	Lord's coming against captivity, collective
3.	O Domine adjuva me	–	A	Aeolian	Persoonal imprecation with consolation
4.	Tristitia et anxietas	–	A	Aeolian	Personal lamentation with consolation
5.	Memento Domine	b	A	Phrygian	Collective imprecation
6.	Vide Domine	b	D	Aeolian	Collective imprecation with expectation of consolation, Jerusalem
7	Deus venerunt gentes	b	D	Aeolian	Pure collective lamentation, Jerusalem
8.	Domine tu jurasti	–	A	Aeolian	Collective imprecation against captivity with expectation of consolation
9.	Vigilate	b	D	Aeolian	Warning, collective
10.	In resurrectione tua	b	A	Phrygian	Exultant Easter Text
11.	Aspice Domine	b	D	Aeolian	Collective imprecation
12.	Ne irascaris	b	F	Ionian	Collective imprecation with lamentation, Jerusalem
13.	O quam gloriosum	b	F	Ionian	Exultant. All Saints
14.	Tribulationes	bb	G	Aeolian	Collective lamentation with imprecation
15.	Domine secundum	–	C	Ionian	Slight personal lamentation with consolation
16.	Laetentur caeli	b	F	Ionian	Rejoicing, consolation of afflicted people

modes which constitutes an important expressive element of Byrd's musical vocabulary.

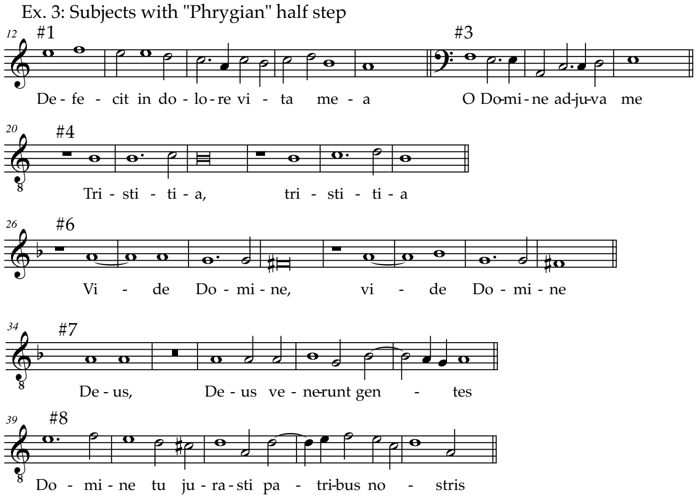
I am using the simple traditional modal system of the sixteenth century, since for the purpose of discussing modal affect, this suffices. I use Glarean's Greek mode names only as a matter of convenience, to avoid differing number systems. I take mode to be first of all a melodic matter, in which patterns of melody suggest a relation to a final and project an affect; the framework for this is the species of fifths and fourths, as sketched out in Example 2. But mode is also contrapuntal, in which the beginning notes of imitations identify the principal notes of the modes and relate to cadences, especially formal ones, the clausula vera. It is finally, as well, harmonic. Since ten out of sixteen pieces fall into the Aeolian mode, I will begin there. For Byrd, it is important to recognize that the Aeolian mode is in some sense already a mixture: in the traditional eight-mode system, a mode on A was analyzed as Dorian transposed because of its first species of fifth, and

Ex. 2: Interval species

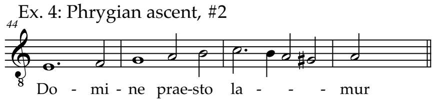


because Dorian chant melodies easily admitted B-flat, the flat sixth degree. But as early as Gaforius, the A-mode was seen as a mixture: the first species of fifth with the second species of fourth (proper to the Phrygian mode). For Byrd, this is a crucial realization, since in particularly lamenting texts in the Aeolian mode, he features the half-step above the fifth, the expressive interval at the bottom of the fourth, so much so that I infer that the traditional affect of the Phrygian mode has been assimilated into the Aeolian mode, and exploited there by emphasizing that half step. The initial subjects of most of the Aeolian pieces feature this half step [see Example 3], sometimes complementing it with a descending half-step in a lower voice. At other times, a figure occurs which I call a Phrygian ascent or descent, relating by direct

Ex. 3: Subjects with "Phrygian" half step



Ex. 4: Phrygian ascent, #2

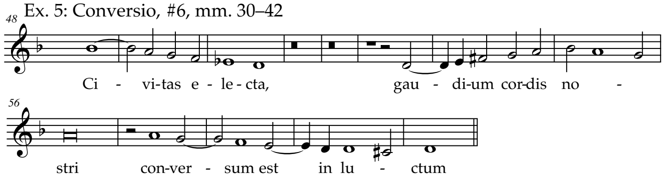


scalewise motion the C reciting note and the E final of the Phrygian mode [see Example 4].

Even within such a subject there can be a commixture. The subject of *Domine tu jurasti* [Example 3, #8] begins in the tenor on E rising the half-step immediately, suggesting a strong Phrygian inflection, but immediately it descends to D and outlines the main pitches of the D mode.

Sometimes, within the same vocal part, a striking change of species underlines a change of affective stance. In *Vide Domine* [see Example 5], a Phrygian descent to D is followed by an ascending fifth with a major third on the words "gaudium cordis nostri," and then through a descending fifth with a minor third on "conversum est in luctum," three different species of fifth in turn. This change in interval species was known specifically to continental theorists as *conversio*, a conversion of one species to another, which then represents a conversion to lamentation. A similar *conversio* occurs later in the same piece (mm. 47–54).

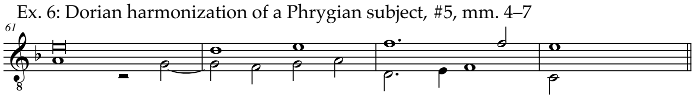
Ex. 5: Conversio, #6, mm. 30–42



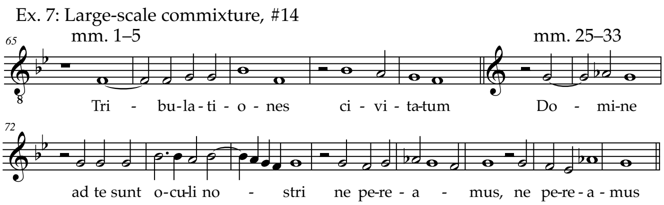
Commixture can occur in initial tones of imitation. While the continental imitative procedure was for each voice simply to identify the final or fifth of the mode by their entering notes, Byrd's practice was more eccentric. Especially in the Aeolian pieces, the notes of entry involve an expansion to three pitches, implying in turn, a commixture of mode. For example, the principal subject of *Defecit in dolore* begins with the half-step upper neighboring-note figure E-F-E, answered by B-C-B, a good Phrygian beginning; in the interim, a complementary downward neighboring-note figure introduces A-G-sharp-A as the entering figure, so within this system of entrances there is a commixture of Phrygian and Aeolian entrances that is only resolved in favor of the Aeolian by a cadence to A (at m. 17).

A more striking exordium is in #5, *Memento Domine*, in which a remarkable change of mode is effected. The piece is in A Phrygian and the five voices enter A-E-A-E-A, the soprano continues that sequence by entering on E to which the contratenor answers with B-natural, contradicting the characteristic A to B-flat half-step of the mode, and implying now B Phrygian, after which the texture calms down and cadences to D. All of this is complicated, though, by the harmonizations of these subjects—often a Phrygian subject is harmonized in Aeolian. Thus the subject entry on E actually is heard harmonically as D Aeolian [Example 6].

Ex. 6: Dorian harmonization of a Phrygian subject, #5, mm. 4–7

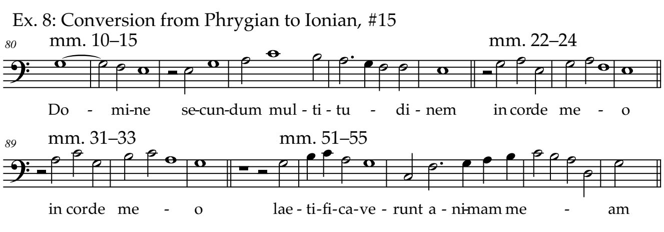


A remarkable large-scale commixture opens #14, *Tribulationes civitatum* [Example 7]. It begins in B-flat Ionian, with a slight reminiscence of the plainsong tone for the Lamentations



of Jeremiah, cadencing with a major chord on C. There follows the apostrophe in the text, "Domine ad te sunt oculi nostri," "O Lord our eyes are upon thee," set to a reiterated Phrygian melodic figure G–A-flat–G; this important turning point in the text is set off by the striking contrast of mode at that point. Moreover, the entire tripartite cantio is ordered by similar commixtures.

A similar commixtio goes in the opposite direction in *Domine secundum multitudinem* [Example 8]. The piece begins with a Phrygian ascent stated in imitation, the last entrance, in the bass, completes it with a descent back down to E with a cadence there. "In corde meo" effects a shift of mode from E to G. Upon the word "laetificaverunt," quicker figures elaborate C more and the piece concludes on a most positive tone, having transformed the Phrygian "multitudes of the sorrows in my heart" into Ionian "consolations gladdening my soul."



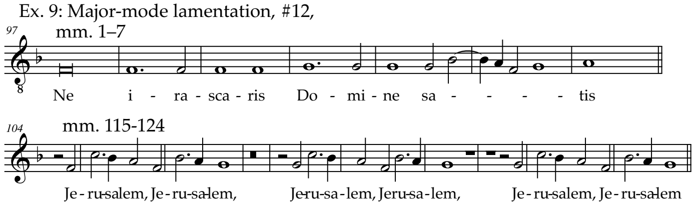
But what of the problem pieces? Why should the exultant *In resurrectione tua* be classed as Phrygian? While it ends on A with a flat signature, it shows little use of the pungent Phrygian half-step; rather, its beginning uses Dorian intervals, and in the middle it shifts through a variety of modes, some of them major; its final cadence, while on A, is not a typical Phrygian cadence.

I suggest that the piece belongs to that kind of Phrygian piece (including some plainsongs) which avoids the Phrygian final until

the end, and whose effect includes the surprise of the final cadence. The exuberant character derives from the variety and activity of the figures. It should be recalled that even in plainsong, the Phrygian mode can express contrasting character, sometimes grave and lamenting, sometimes exultant, as in some alleluias of the Easter season.

And what about *Ne irascaris*, one of the most favorite pieces of the collection? How does its solid Ionian mode reflect the sense of desolation in the text? First of all, it should be recognized that, while Byrd only employed one real plainsong cantus firmus in the collection, on infrequent occasions he also set a melody as a kind of reminiscence of a plainsong. This is such a reminiscence; it is the chant for the Lamentations of Jeremiah at Tenebrae (something that had given Josquin, or Nino le Petit, the same mode in *Planxit autem David*). The connection is further reinforced by noting the emphasis given "Jerusalem" a reminiscence of the formulaic conclusion of the lamentations at Tenebrae, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum" [Example 9].

Ex. 9: Major-mode lamentation, #12,



There is yet another facet of the major mode setting of this text. I would suggest that there are two different ways in which a text of lamentation can be set affectively; one is to express the urgency and distress of the lamentation; the other is to provide consolation to the distress.

Clearly this setting does the latter: Byrd's setting of "Be not angry, O Lord" conveys a confidence that the Lord will be not angry and thus provides consolation in the very act of expressing the lamentation. The tempo of the beginning and the balance and equanimity of the melody confirms that.

As a conclusion I would make two theoretical speculations. I concur with Jesse Ann Owens that Byrd is not a "theoretical"

composer; he is responding to personally chosen texts in an intense way drawing from the musical vocabulary of tradition and his own milieu; his genius touches upon the fact that in doing so he yet made some remarkable constructions from a theoretical point of view.

He followed an English penchant for imitations that comprise a chain of three fifths, such as D-A-E; this is closely related to his manner of introducing a pair of pitches, say, A-E, and then cadencing down one more, D. This is not a purely "tonal" practice, and yet is not entirely different either. It might be a modal antecedent of the role of secondary dominants in later tonal music.

A more interesting speculation concerns the identity of the Aeolian and Phrygian modes. This collection shows a wide variety of kinds of Aeolian mode, some more like a transposed Dorian, some highly intermixed with Phrygian elements. Likewise, the two Phrygian pieces approach the Aeolian in quite distinct ways. The interaction of these two modes suggests a state of flux between them, even that they are just one general category with all degrees of variation within them—the range of affects they set is shared between them, so that even when we may call an A mode with one flat Phrygian, we may also say that Byrd has gone beyond Glarean, and at least for this collection, there are two principal modal categories, Ionian on the one hand, and Aeolian with "Phrygian" on the other, just as there are two affects, grave and merrie.

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THE ECONOMY OF BYRD'S *GRADUALIA*

The final concerts of the William Byrd Festival for the first seven years focused upon one of the three collections entitled *Cantiones sacrae* from the years 1575, 1589, and 1591. Then, beginning in 2005, the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Gradualia* was the occasion to begin a four-year series focusing upon that collection, the first two years on Book I (1605) and the next two upon Book II (1607). This series prompts a reflection on the nature of the *Gradualia* and the difference between this collection and the previous sets of *Cantiones sacrae*.

Cantiones sacrae and *Gradualia* represent two strikingly different musical genres, and it is worth exploring these differences in order to understand the pieces better. Cantiones are songs, which, according to the title of Byrd and Tallis's publication of 1575—by the nature of their texts are called sacred—substantial works of sacred vocal chamber music without a designated place in the liturgy. Gradualia, on the other hand, are specifically liturgical pieces, mostly propers of the Mass, whose texts are assigned to specific days of the church year, and which generally fall into sets of

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pieces—introit, gradual, alleluia or tract, offertory, and communion for each specific day.

The genres thus differ by the purpose of their choice of text. Byrd seems to have chosen the texts of the cantiones specifically for their affective potential. Famously, the texts of the cantiones show a polarity of potential affect, expressed in Byrd's terms, between "grave" and "merry," the grave greatly outnumbering the merry. In the absence of a place for the singing of Latin sacred music, Byrd's works of the 1570s and 80s show a preponderance of pieces lamenting the state of the church or the state of the soul, and their texts suggest that many of them may have been composed for the consolation of recusant musicians in recreational singing. The gradualia, on the other hand, come from the time that Byrd once again had a liturgical occasion for the performance of his Latin compositions: in the 1590s he moved to Essex, where he was close to the aristocratic house of the Petres, who regularly had Masses celebrated in their household, often with some solemnity. Once the choice was made to compose Mass propers, however, there was little further choice of text—the liturgy specified what the texts were, and that specification was for a wide variety of reasons, most of them not affective reasons. So the texts of the liturgy do not show the affective polarity of the cantiones, but rather a more consistent range of affects.

These differences result in very different approaches to the composition of the music. While the cantiones are discursive and project rather short texts in somewhat extended pieces, the gradualia are tight and economically-composed pieces, noted for their brevity and conciseness. An analogy could be drawn with J.S. Bach's fugues: the organ fugues are discursive; they are drawn-out and rhetorical, and hearing them involves taking part in a discussion, in which themes are developed in a full and extended way, and in which the duration of the piece provides adequate time to assimilate the discussion. The fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, in contrast, are succinct, logical, and right to the point. In fact, they are so concentrated that one does not relish hearing many of them in quick succession. Each brief prelude and fugue is best heard and then savored in reflection, with some time to absorb what has just been heard. I have heard a cycle of all forty-eight

played in three concerts; by the end of each concert, I was resisting listening to the pieces, so much had the previous pieces of the concert demanded my attention beyond the duration of their playing. The concentration of the pieces of the *Gradualia* can function in a similar way in the liturgy. They would be interspersed among several other sung elements—prayers, lessons, and perhaps even chants of the ordinary. Their concentrated style would thus provide a complement to the other liturgical elements, giving them an increased and more complex musical resonance.

The basis of both genres is imitation: a subject is stated by each voice in succession, and that "point of imitation" is brought to a conclusion by a cadence. Much of the difference between the two genres consists of the ways in which imitation is handled. Compare the beginning of two pieces as examples: *Tristitia* from the *Cantiones*, 1589, and *Salve, sancta parens* from the *Gradualia*, 1605.[1] *Tristitia* [*Brett*, 2, 42–61; *Cardinall's* 7, Bd. 4] begins with a

[1]The examples can be consulted in the following scores and recordings, as indicated in the text:

SCORES:

Brett. William Byrd, *The Byrd Edition*, ed. Phillip Brett, Vol. 2: *Cantiones sacrae* I (1589), ed. Alan Brown (London: Stainer & Bell, 1988), Vol. 5: *Gradualia I* (1605), *The Marian Masses*, ed. Philip Brett (1989); Vol. 6a: *Gradualia I* (1605), All Saints and Corpus Christi, ed. Philip Brett (1991). There is also an earlier edition: William Byrd, *The Complete Vocal Works*, ed. Edmund H. Fellowes (London: Stainer & Bell, 1938), vols. 2, 4–7. All of these pieces can also be found online at Choral Public Domain Library (www.cpdl.org).

RECORDINGS:

Cardinall's 7: William Byrd. *The Byrd Edition, 7. Cantiones sacrae 1589, Propers for Lady Mass from Christmas to the Purification*. The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director. Gaudeamus CD GAU 224; London: ASV Ltd., 2001.

Cardinall's 8: William Byrd. *The Byrd Edition, 8. Cantiones Sacrae 1589, Propers for the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood, director. Gaudeamus CD GAU 309; London: ASV Ltd., 2002.

Marian: William Byrd. *Gradualia: The Marian Masses*. William Byrd Choir, Gavin Turner, Conductor. 515221T; London: Hyperion, 1990; reissue, Oakhurst, New Jersey: Musical Heritage Society, 1998.

Christ Church: William Byrd. *Mass for Five Voices and the Propers for All Saints' Day*. Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Stephen Darlington, director. NI 5237; Wyastone Leys, Monmouth: Nimbus Records, Ltd., 1990.

homophonic statement in the lower voices, answered by the higher voices; only gradually does complete imitation in all the voices emerge. The first brief line of text extends through several repetitions to a fairly long segment of the composition. *Salve, sancta parens* [*Brett*, 5, 40–49; *Marian*, Bd. 9], on the other hand, begins with an imitation in three voices, and after three measures has moved on to the next segment of text, and in two more measures, the next text. This is a characteristic construction for pieces of the *Gradualia*, in which rather short modules of the text receive short imitative points in quick succession. Byrd paces these modules quite purposefully, however, for subsequent ones take up more time, notably that on "in saecula saeculorum," presumably to express the temporal aspect of this text (something he does elsewhere to represent eternity).

Another aspect of the economy of the *Gradualia* is in the ordering of the whole collection. The liturgy often calls for the use of the same text on more than one day; when this happens, Byrd most often does not recompose the text, but expects the performer to supply the musical setting of the text from the day for which it was composed. This results in a complicated system of interlocking pieces, especially in the pieces for the Marian feasts. In order for such exchanges to work well, the pieces have to be in the same mode; thus, all the pieces for Marian feasts are in the D-Aeolian mode. The result is that in general, the Mass propers for any one day are all in the same mode, and this is a major innovation in the history of the composition of Mass propers. The traditional proper chants were in various modes, without any evident coordination of mode for any day, and the tradition of composition of polyphonic propers included the original chants as *cantus prius factus*, such as those of Dufay and Isaac. The integration of a cycle of polyphonic propers by a single mode may have been suggested by the practicalities of economically setting the texts; the result was a remarkable innovation in the setting of the propers of the Mass.[2]

[2]These matters have been dealt with extensively by Phillip Brett, *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph*, ed. Joseph Kerman and Davitt Moroney (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), and Kerry McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation in Byrd's Gradualia* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

The most important aspect of the economy of the *Gradualia*, is the style of the music itself—tight, brief, and concise. There may be several reasons for this. First, Byrd is setting texts prescribed by the Council of Trent for the Roman liturgy, and not the texts of the ancient English Sarum rite. A characteristic feature of the Roman rite is its brevity and economy.[3] Since Byrd's models were probably graduals published after the Council of Trent, it is possible that the economic spirit of that rite suggested a certain brevity. There is, of course, a more immediate motivation for composing rather brief settings of the liturgical texts when they are for performance at Masses celebrated in recusant households. Given the possibility of being discovered, the celebration of Mass needed to be brief. The brevity of the offertories is notable: the time it takes to say the offertory in the traditional rite is considerably extended if the customary incensation of the altar is used. But the use of incense must have been a luxury they dared not allow themselves, for if they were discovered, the accouterments of the Mass could be hidden quickly, but the fragrance of incense would persist as a sure give-away. A third possibility suggests itself for Byrd's concise style. John Harley, in his recent biography of Byrd, has pointed out that in the latter part of Byrd's life he was frequently involved in law courts defending his right to hold properties; it may well be that this repeated experience gave him much practice in making concise and to-the-point statements, a habit that could carry over into the composition of concise pieces of music.

The economy of style can be seen in several characteristics. First, there is a modular construction of melodies. Compare the melody of *Domine præstolamur* from the *Cantiones sacrae*, 1589 [*Brett*, 2, 15–31; *Cardinall's 7*, Bd. 2] with *Salve sancta parens* from the first book of the *Gradualia*. The opening melody of *Domine præstolamur* is a wide-ranging melody, which in imitation makes for an expansive opening. The opening of *Salve sancta parens*, on the other hand, consists of short, modular units; "Salve sancte

[3] See Edmund Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite," in *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918; reprint, 1962), pp. 1–19.

parens" is presented in imitation in just three voices, after which "enixa puerpera Regem," is imitated in five voices, without any repetition, and the for the next module the same.

A second way the economy of style is manifested is in the avoidance of counter-expositions. Frequently in the cantiones there is a manner of constructing imitation, in which after an "exposition"—the presentation of the subject in each of the voices in turn—the subject is presented again in all the voices. This "counter-exposition" contributes considerably to the breadth and scope of the expression of each line of text. Such complete counter-expositions are rare in the *Gradualia*; if there is any extension of the exposition of a point of imitation, it is more frequently incomplete, as in *Gaudeamus*, the introit for All Saints [*Brett*, 6a, 27–36; *Marian*, Bd. 39], where, after a complete point of imitation in all the voices, there is a brief restatement of "gaudeamus" in two voices simultaneously, followed by a quick succession of "in Domino" in three voices.

A third way the economy of style is manifested is in the quick succession of texts. The avoidance of extended repetition of imitations means that modules of the text can be presented rather quickly. Characteristically, if there is any repetition of imitations, it comes upon the last line of text, creating a more emphatic conclusion to the piece. Such is the case in *Benedicta et venerabilis es* [*Brett*, 5, 50–52; *Marian*, Bd. 12] from the set for the Nativity of Mary. Here each short line of text it treated in full imitation in five voices, with the beginning of the imitations based upon the next line overlapping it. The final line of text, "inventa es mater Salvatoris," receives a counter-exposition in four of the five voices, but its purpose is clear: these imitations are at a higher pitch and thus create an effective culminating conclusion to the short piece.

While in general the text modules are presented in quick succession, Byrd sometimes makes purposeful permutation of such quick succession, extending the performance of one or another text module, particularly toward the end of the piece. This variation of the manner of presentation of text modules is one of the means Byrd uses to create an extraordinary variety within these short pieces. A good example is *Gaudeamus* for All Saints. The

initial imitation begins in three voices, all at the unison, creating an ostinato effect that enhances the festive character of the beginning. Yet, each of the three unison statements rises to a higher peak on "Domino," creating a climax on the third one, coinciding with the entrance of the first lower voice; another entrance, still lower completes the expansion of range. There follows, on "diem festum celebrantes," a remarkable enhancement of the festive character of the piece. Here the speed of the text has been doubled: on "Gaudeamus," the syllables of the text were set, about one to a half note, with important accented syllables on whole notes or dotted whole notes; now they are on the quarter note, with important syllables on the half or dotted half note. This quick homophonic statement is repeated twice, each at a different pitch level and with slightly greater breaking up of the homophonic texture. There follows another striking shift of text tempo: on "sub honore Sanctorum omnium," the syllables are set to half and whole notes, all the accented syllables set to longer notes, now in quick imitation. This shift to a slightly slower text tempo than even at the beginning of the piece creates a momentary allusion to a more solemn style, suitable to the idea of the text: honor. "De quorum solemnitate" shifts back to a quarternote tempo and a richly various imitative texture, recalling in tempo "diem festum celebrantes," but contrasting remarkably with it in texture. The next module, "gaudent Angeli" includes much repetition, as if to represent an incessant quality in the rejoicing of the Angels; moreover, the activity of the Angels is presented as the most various in the piece, including much syncopation and an occasional cross relation giving an affective touch to the mix. Then "collaudant," while retaining the same quality of quick imitation, is more regular in imitation, now representing the Angels as doing something together. The object of their praise, "Filium Dei," is then resent in a smoother, more continuous texture, with a longer scope of repetition, enhancing the name of the Son of God as the conclusion of the piece.

In certain pieces, the variety of treatment of the text modules shows a transformation of texture within the setting of the module, and also serves the purpose of representation of specific meanings of the text. The alleluia verse, *Venite ad me* [*Brett*, 6a,

42–47; *Christ Church*, Bd. 4, 2:07] from All Saints is a good example of this. It begins as a straight-forward antiphonal texture, two voices in note-against-note style are answered by three voices in the same style, after which four voices enter, but now two are offset by a half note from the other two, adding an element of complexity. The progressive addition of voices is completed when all five voices sing together on the word "omnes." This begins as a block chord comprising the widest range of notes in the piece (from low B-flat to high F), and is a way of representing "all," by including all of the voices and all of the notes. "Qui laboratis" is set in imitation to a subject which turns on itself in a labored fashion, and "et onorati estis" suddenly acquires a great number of short notes, giving the singers an extra burden, representing the text. Finally "et ego reficiam vos" is set to a dance-like pattern, whose lively and alluring rhythms amply compensate for the labor and burden of the previous passages.

The variety of texture and imitations in setting short modules of text does not, however, distract Byrd from constructing pieces which have strongly persuasive overall structures; two examples for All Saints are particularly interesting: the offertory *Justorum animæ* and the communion *Beati mundo corde*. *Justorum animæ* [*Brett*, 6a, 48–52; *Christ Church*, Bd. 6] is based upon a text which contrasts the apparent and the real state of the souls of the just:

Justorum animæ in
manu Dei sunt, et non
tanget illos, tormentum
mortis: visi sunt oculis
insipientium mori: illi
autem sunt in pace.

The souls of the just are in the
hand of God, and it will not
touch them, the torment of
death: they seem to the eyes
of the unknowing to be dead:
they are, however, in peace.

Byrd divides the text into the portions which state the fact and those which are contrary to fact: those which are the fact are set in a major mode (F Ionian), while those that are contrary to fact are in a minor mode (G Dorian). Within this framework, each text module receives a distinct texture. "Justorum animæ" receives a nearly homophonic statement, emphasizing the text by

setting the accented syllables to longer notes; "in manu Dei sunt" then begins to be more imitative, while "et non tanget illos" is set to voice exchange—upon repetition, the two sopranos exchange parts and the bass takes what the tenor had just sung. This brief repeat of the text prepares for the change of mode on "tormentum mortis," which is then emphasized by two harmonically varied repetitions, confirming the change of mode. "Visi sunt oculis" begins with a striking motive, descending and rising a fifth, leading to a kind of imbroglio on "insipientium mori." Here the fifth-based motive, which ordinarily would be set to a consistent treatment of fifths, is now set in a confused way—the fifths both ascend and descend, and they fall on a variety of pitches, E-flat, B-flat, F, C, D, and A, leaving out G, which was the focal pitch of the passage. This confused state—not following the conventions of consistent use of species of fifths—is Byrd's way of representing the unknowing, those who cannot get their fifths straight, as it were. The section cadences on C, leading to a return to F for the contrasting statement "illi autem sunt in pace." This recalls the melody of "Justorum animæ" in the soprano and leads to a peroration which now uses the species of fifths consistently, all descending and mostly are on F or B-flat; what was disorderly and active on "insipientium" is now orderly and leading to repose on "in pace." Moreover, the descent is emphasized by going a note below the fifth in several cases. This descent is further emphasized by the fact that all the voices at this point reach their lowest point: neither soprano part has touched the bottom note of its octave ambitus, F, until here upon the word "pace," peace. The bass makes a particularly pointed descent beyond its low B-flat to a poignant A, the lowest note of the whole piece. In this, several kinds of descent conspire to create a tranquil conclusion that is the antithesis of the confusion in the imbroglio on "insipientium mori."

The communion *Beati mundo corde* [*Brett*, 6a, 53–59; *Christ Church*, Bd. 8] has an evident climactic structure, moving from three to four to five voices, but this structure is also made more emphatic by having the five-voice section be longer and contain the most expressive music. The piece begins by representing the pure of heart by treble voices singing "pure" imitations. The section

in four parts represents the peace-makers with stepwise descent on "pacifici," recalling the descents of *Justorum animæ*. The five-part section represents those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, and its importance is emphasized immediately by the sopranos' "beati" which rise to F, the highest note in both parts, but also by the tenors who also rise to their high F. A point of poignancy is made on "propter justitiam" by striking simultaneous cross relations and other dissonances,[4] and by the double repetition of that text. Joseph Kerman has written eloquently about the ways in which certain passages of sacred texts had very personal resonances for Byrd, and this is one of them. That resonance is underscored by the extended treatment of the part of this text which speaks of suffering persecution for the sake of justice, and by the employment of particular expressive devices there.

A final brief point about texture: while he does not use it often, Byrd occasionally used a cantus firmus texture—longer notes in one part, setting off a notable melody. The Introit *Salve sancta parens* begins with three voices in imitation, while the alto sings in longer notes the rising figure, A-F-E, setting off that figure and pointing to the fact that it recalls the outline of the Gregorian melody for this introit: A-C-D-E-D, D-D-C-D-E-F-D-D. This is not a quotation, but merely a reminiscence of the chant; nevertheless, it is the kind of reference that Byrd makes in several places in the *Gradualia*.

A very different cantus firmus usage can be seen in *Optimam partem* [*Brett*, 5, 170–174; *Marian*, Bd. 42], the communion for the Assumption of Mary. Here the top soprano begins the piece with reiterated notes followed by longer notes, accompanied by faster melodic motion in the lower parts. The soprano continues to sing at a relatively high pitch for the piece. Does this cantus-firmus-like treatment in the highest part of the piece represent the better part which the text says that Mary has chosen?

The economies of the *Gradualia* are several: first, there is the economy of organization—a somewhat elaborate system of using

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[4] On the fourth iteration of "propter justitiam" in the alto, the half-note A is dissonant with the B-flat in the tenor and then with the G in the second soprano.

the same pieces over again, based in an economy of the liturgy itself. Second, there is an economy of materials—short melodic segments, discreet statements. But most important, third, there is an economy of style—the adoption of a concise manner of expression that does not focus upon the expression of the moment as often as in the *Cantiones sacrae*, but projects small pieces as parts of the larger whole—the whole liturgy for the day as well as for the whole year.

The economic style is, paradoxically, the point of departure for more elaborate expressions, even a foil for them, often linked to particular texts, whether representing eternity, the ecstatic activity of angels, the excitement of the word alleluia, or the pathos of suffering for the sake of justice. Likewise, it is the point of departure for a characteristic kind of development, which starts from the simple and discreet and moves quickly in stages to the rich and complex.

All of this is within the strict constraints of the liturgy. We are fortunate to hear two complete cycles of mass propers on the final concert, but also to hear one within the context of the liturgy, the Mass for the Assumption. There the introit *Gaudeamus*, in contrast with that for All Saints, projects, not so much external festivity, but an internal and more mystical joy suited to the Virgin's festivity; there, rising melodic lines vividly recall Mary's assumption into heaven; there Mary's having "chosen the better part," is depicted in an elegant cantus firmus style. In each of these cases, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, because it adds up to a liturgical whole—which was Byrd's purpose.

26

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741) AND HIS SACRED MUSIC[1]

This year marks the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Antonio Vivaldi. Through concert performances[2] and recordings in commemoration of this anniversary, audiences are hearing works they have not heard before, and have a basis for a more complete picture of Vivaldi as a composer. It is appropriate that he receive commemoration on these pages as well, for among his works there are as many as 68 pieces of sacred music, some of them the equal of his best instrumental music. The present article, after a sketch of his work in general, considers his sacred liturgical music, addressing in particular the question, what makes these works "sacred music?"

In one sense, special commemoration of Vivaldi might seem superfluous, since his music is well-received in our own day. A performance of a concerto by Vivaldi is often no further away than the FM radio; indeed, if one's own children are taught to play the violin

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[1] This article is based upon a lecture given for the Carmel Bach Festival in commemoration of the Vivaldi anniversary on July 18 and 25, 1978; *Sacred Music* 105, no. 4 (1978).

[2] For example, the Carmel Bach Festival devoted its special concert in the mission church of San Carlos Borromeo entirely to the music of Vivaldi. The concert, under the direction of Sandor Salgo, included the *Sinfonia al Santo Sepolchro*, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Concerto for three violins in a minor*, and the *Beatus vir*. Another concert of the festival included Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

according to the method of Suzuki, they will probably play Vivaldi before they read "Run, Spot, run." There is a certain clarity and directness to Vivaldi's music that makes it perhaps the most easily accessible of all baroque music. But this popularity is quite recently-earned.

It is true that in Vivaldi's lifetime he enjoyed enormous popularity, but it comes as a surprise that he was in greater demand for his operas than for his concerti. Indeed we know the titles of some 48 operas, though only fourteen of them are extant in their entirety.[3] By the end of his life, however, his popularity had waned, and with it the fortune he had earned in the production of operas, and he died a pauper.

Though a number of his instrumental works had been published in his own lifetime,[4] the bulk of the works remained forgotten until recently. Only in the years following 1926 did a large cache of Vivaldi manuscripts come to light. Their discovery and acquisition by Professor Alberto Gentile is narrated by Walter Kolneder,[5] and has the intrigue and excitement of a fictional detective story. Gentile persuaded two Turinese industrialists to purchase the manuscripts for the National Library in Turin, and they are kept there under their names, Foà and Giordano. This collection contains 300 concertos, 8 sonatas, 14 complete operas, five volumes of sacred works, and two volumes of secular vocal works.[6] This discovery was an incentive to the publication of many of Vivaldi's works, as well as to research on his biography.[7] Indeed many of the details of his life, even the dates of his birth and death have been discovered only recently.

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[3] Walter Kolneder, *Antonio Vivaldi, His Life and Works*, tr. Bill Hopkins (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 33.

[4] There are fourteen published opera, each containing from six to twelve works for various instruments. Cf. Marc Pincherle, *Vivaldi, Genius of the Baroque*, tr. Christopher Hatch (New York: Norton, 1957), pp. 65–67.

[5] Kolneder, *Vivaldi*, pp. 2–6.

[6] Ibid., p. 2.

[7] Cf. particularly, Marc Pincherle, *Antonio Vivaldi et Ia musique instrumentale* (Paris: Floury, 1948).

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice on March 4, 1678. His father was a violinist in one of the orchestras at the Basilica of St. Mark, under the direction of the composer Legrenzi. He probably received his early training as a violinist from his father, and perhaps also from Legrenzi; already as a young man he was known as a virtuoso violinist. Shortly after attaining the canonical age of twenty-five, he was ordained a priest, and in the Fall of that year he was appointed teacher of violin at the Ospidale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls, which maintained a famous conservatory of music; subsequently he was director of the orchestra there. Within a year of his ordination he had received dispensation from the obligation to say Mass. He suffered from what has been varyingly called bronchial asthma and angina pectoris, and attacks of this disease some times forced him to interrupt his saying of Mass. This is probably the source of the apocryphal story that he interrupted the Mass to run out to the sacristy and take down a fugue subject which had just come to mind. Such a story, of course, seems all the more apocryphal when the way he composed is considered. He was extremely prolific of melodic invention, and could conceive of music as fast as he could write it down. He kept his priestly status and seems to have continued to say his office. His duties at the Ospidale della Pietà included composing music and rehearsing the orchestra for the frequent concerts which made the institution famous. The young ladies were apparently very accomplished players and singers, having received intensive musical instruction since they were very young. The performances were known particularly for their refinement of expression, the care with which they had been prepared, and the beauty and purity of sound with which the musicians played and sang. It is undoubtedly for this institution that most of Vivaldi's works aside from his operas were composed, and the two hundred and twenty solo violin concertos suggest that he was himself an active participant in the concerts. His service at the Ospidale was frequently interrupted by departures for other Italian cities as well as for Vienna and Prague, where he undertook productions of his operas. Indeed, the crushing labor of composing a whole opera, engaging musicians, rehearsing, and performing which he undertook, sometimes all within a month or two, has given some scholars pause as to how serious his illness really was. In the later years

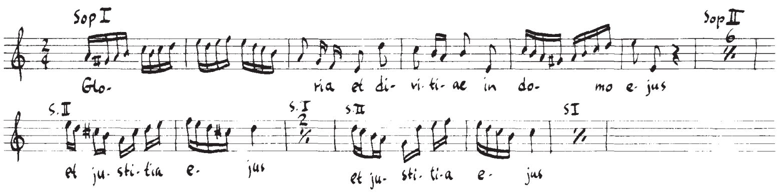
of his life, new fashions in opera left him behind, and as his renown declined, the overseers of the Ospidale became more demanding and less tolerant of him. Apparently in search of other employment, he journeyed to Vienna, where he died on July 28, 1741. The record of his funeral expenses indicates that he must have died with almost no means, for the expenses are only those of a pauper.

Vivaldi's music has for today's listener an immediacy, a vitality, and a clarity, which, while characteristic of Italian music of his time in general, is especially evident in his own works. One need only recall that his formative years as a composer were spent at the Pietà; here, in spite of the technical accomplishments of the young musicians, he would have needed to write music whose overall interpretation posed few problems to performers who had not yet reached their full musical maturity. These extremely direct and clear works show the hand of a master who learned his craft by writing for such specific circumstances of performance.

There is no denying that he often wrote in haste; his duties were many, and demand for a large volume of new compositions was great. He relied upon stock musical figures, and upon tried and true methods of developing them. There is even occasionally a certain roughness in contrapuntal or harmonic progression which betrays a greater concern for the overall shape of the work than for intricacy of detail. Yet he cannot be accused of having written routine music. The witty, but truly misleading remark of Dallapiccola that Vivaldi had written the same concerto six hundred times,[8] may be applied only to composers of lesser status than Vivaldi. If he is judged as other composers are judged by the best works, one cannot deny that there are many works of genius, which, far from merely repeating well-worn conventions, make unique and interesting musical forms in which conventional materials are integrated according to the nature of the materials in unique and effective ways.

[8] Pincherle, *Vivaldi, Genius*, p. 68. Kolneder points out that this is already a paraphrase of a remark originally used to describe the symphonies of Bruckner, *Vivaldi*, p. 211.

This characteristic clarity of procedure can be seen in several specific traits of Vivaldi's style. His themes are distinguished by a clarity of harmony, tonality, and phrase construction. See, for instance, example 1, below.



The basic construction of a theme is that the first part of it clearly outlines a triad or scale which defines the key and projects a sense of tonal stability. The second part of the theme then proceeds in sequences, each member of which is unambiguous in tonality, but which projects a sense of key movement. There is never the slightest rhythmic ambiguity; rather, a vital, energetic rhythmic drive forms a solid basis for the sense of assurance with which the music moves.

It is however in his treatment of overall musical forms that one must see his great gift of ingenuity. In fact, recent research has assigned him an important role in the clarification of the form of a concerto movement.[9] His treatment of the aria as well is one in which he made a contribution to the history of the genre;[10] here the greater integration of concerto-like elements is attributed to him. Both of these developments play a role in sacred music, as will be seen in the following discussion.

Most of Vivaldi's sacred music is found in the Foà and Giordano collections in the National Library at Turin. Raimond Ruegge has studied the body of sacred works and presented an extensive listing.[11] He lists a total of 47 authenticated works, which include among the liturgical texts the following:

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[9] Walter Kolneder, *Die Solokonzertform bei Vivaldi* (Strasbourg: P. H. Heitz, 1961).

[10] Walter Kolneder, "Vivaldis Aria-Concerto," *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, IX (1964), 17–27.

[11] "Die Kirchenmusik von Antonio Vivaldi," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung*, CXI (1971), pp. 135–139. A complete thematic index of Vivaldi's sacred works can

10 for solo and orchestra
10 for chorus and orchestra
3 for solo voice(s) and double orchestra
5 for double choir and double orchestra.

Among the non-liturgical texts there are ten motets for a single solo voice and orchestra, and eight curious pieces called *introduzione*, pieces with non-liturgical texts meant as introductions to liturgical pieces, somewhat like the tropes of the Middle Ages. Finally, though a dramatic work, the oratorio *Juditha Triumphans* might be classed with the sacred works because of its biblical subject matter and Latin text.

It has often been said that the sacred music of the eighteenth century represents an invasion of the church from the theater and the concert hail, that the sacred arias of a composer such as Vivaldi could easily be made into operatic music by the mere substitution of a secular text. Is there any criterion by which the sacredness or secularity of such a work might be judged? Is there a common musical language shared by the sacred and secular spheres, and if so where is the distinction to be found, if at all?

First it will be useful to reflect upon the question of what makes a work of art sacred. By examining some cases of acknowledged sacred art, a few general principles may be observed which will be applicable to music.

A sacred work might be in a style that is neutral, generally used in both sacred and secular works; the style may be adaptable to a sacred work simply because it is able to serve a sacred subject matter well. A Renaissance painting which may have used ordinary human models would still not be confused as a secular painting because the subject matter, identifiable in the context of the painting, is sacred; the idealized features and the proportioned composition of the style are well suited to the sacred subject matter, though not restricted to it.

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be found in Peter Ryom, *Verzeichnis der Werke Antonio Vivaldis, Kleine Ausgabe* (Leipzig: Deutsche Verlag für Musik, 1974), pp. 104–113. The numbers of this catalogue, e.g., RV 597 for *Beatus vir*, are now being used to identify Vivaldi's works much as the *Schmieder Verzeichnis* is for Bach.

A work might be seen to be sacred because it embodies some quality particularly appropriate to its sacred purpose. For example, a gothic cathedral elicits a specific response from one who enters it; the upward sweep of its lines moves the attention of the observer to be lifted up, and predisposes him to prayer; this is a quality particularly suited to a sacred work.

A work might embody a recognizably sacred style or form. A Byzantine icon is painted in a specifically sacred style; there is no mistaking it as a secular work, even when the person depicted is not recognized, for its style has been reserved for such works by tradition. A gothic cathedral is constructed in a sacred form, that of a cross; it is recognized as a sacred form with many levels of architectural and theological signification, and one does not expect to see it used for a secular building.

In each of these cases, there is something which distinguishes the work as sacred. Where there are secular elements, they have been transformed, even consecrated, by their relation to the sacred element. The presence of secular elements does not necessarily keep a work from being a sacred work; rather the sacred elements order the secular ones, somewhat as grace orders nature.

A first way in which a piece may be seen to be sacred, then, is that the work have a sacred subject matter and context of usage. Many of Vivaldi's sacred works are upon Latin liturgical texts; as such they are sacred works by the content of their texts and in their use of a sacred language. But are they liturgical works, or are they simply sacred texts set for concert performance?

Such great works as Bach's *B minor Mass*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and Verdi's *Requiem* have often been called "concert Masses," with the implication that they were composed, not for liturgical use, but for concerts. This was supported by the Caecilian assumption that works with orchestra and soloists, works of considerable length which "delayed" the efficient saying of the texts of the Mass, and works which employed musical idioms heard in concert and operatic music were unsuitable to the liturgy. This is, at the least, a mistaken view of the history of the works. The term "concert Mass" may have come into use by a misapplication of the seventeenth-century term *concertato* as it contrasts with *a capella*. In the seventeenth century, *a capella* simply meant that the instruments

followed the sixteenth-century practice of doubling the choral parts,[12] while *concertato* meant that when they joined a choral performance, they played parts written specifically for the instruments. Further, composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote specifically sacred concert music that derived immediately from secular forms: from the opera came the oratorio, and from the secular cantata came the sacred cantata, called motet in the works of Vivaldi. There is no historical reason to believe that the great works on liturgical texts mentioned above were written for concert performance. In the case of many works of Vivaldi, there is in fact good reason to believe that they were written quite specifically for liturgical usage.

Aside from the three movements of the Mass, Vivaldi's compositions on liturgical texts generally belong to the office of vespers. This was, in fact, an important and well-attended public service in his time. The standardization of the order of the liturgy which followed the Council of Trent provided composers the assurance of universal suitability for their pieces, and there followed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a large number of publications of settings for vespers. The solemn singing of vespers on Sundays and feast days came to be an elaborate affair, and it was not uncommon for this single service to last for two or three hours in churches where such music was especially cultivated. But the question remains, were Vivaldi's pieces written for such services?

The question can be answered by comparing the order for vespers with the extant pieces of Vivaldi. The office of vespers as sung in the Roman rite contains five psalms.[13] These usually belong to one or two basic groups: the first is for feasts of the Lord, Sundays, feasts of martyrs and of male saints in general:

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[12] This is not to say that choirs never sang without the doubling of instruments; in fact, such a practice seems to have had a rather long and continuous history in the Sistine Chapel; but the term *a capella* was probably not used in specific reference to the Sistine Chapel until the nineteenth century.

[13] Pius X's reform of the office did not affect this ordering; thus the order as found in the *Liber Usualis* is identical in these matters with that in use since the Council of Trent.

1. Ps. 109, *Dixit Dominus*
2. Ps. 110, *Confitebor tibi*
3. Ps. 111, *Beatus vir*
4. Ps. 112, *Laudate pueri*
5. { Ps. 113, *In exitu Israel* (for Sundays)
   Ps. 115, *Credidi* (for feasts of martyrs)
   Ps. 116, *Laudate Dominum* (for feasts of the Lord and of male saints in general) }

The second group is used on feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and of other female saints:

1. Ps. 109, *Dixit Dominus*
2. Ps. 112, *Laudate pueri*
3. Ps. 121, *Laetatus sum*
4. Ps. 126, *Nisi Dominus*
5. Ps. 147, *Lauda Jerusalem*

Ten of Vivaldi's psalm settings call for the accompaniment of a single orchestra. All of these pieces belong to the foregoing list of psalms, and each psalm is provided with one setting. This suggests that Vivaldi meant to provide a complete setting of the basic psalms of vespers for feast days. That he considered their placement within vespers is also suggested by his use of soloists or chorus. Those psalms which fall in first, third, or fifth position are for chorus, while the second and fourth are for soloists, providing an alternation of chorus and solo through the five psalms. The *Magnificat*, a few scattered hymns and the *Salve Regina*[14] could be used to augment the performance of vespers to up to eight concerted pieces in one service, and most feast days are provided with all the necessary psalms. That most of the solo parts are for women's voices[15] suggests that this represents the repertory for vespers of the Ospidale.

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[14] The *Salve Regina* is proper to vespers when not followed immediately by compline.

[15] The exception is *Confitebor tibi*.

The settings for accompaniment by two orchestras show a slightly different pattern:

Response, *Domine ad adjuvandum meum intende* (chorus)
(to introductory versicle *Deus in adjutorium*)
Ps. 109, *Dixit Dominus* (chorus)
Ps. 111, *Beatus vir* (chorus)
Ps. 112, *Laudate pueri* (soloists)
Ps. 147, *Lauda Jerusalem* (chorus)
Marian antiphon, *Salve Regina* (soloists, two settings)[16]

It would seem that these pieces do not belong to the vespers of any single occasion, since *Beatus vir* belongs only to the first set of psalms, while *Lauda Jerusalem* belongs only to the second. There are, however, some exceptional occasions when *Lauda Jerusalem* is used as the fifth psalm of the first series: the feasts of Saints Agnes and Agatha, the dedication of a church, and the feast of the Most Precious Blood.[17] On any of these days, this entire series of double-orchestra psalms would have been proper. That the choral pieces are also for a double choir suggests that they follow the practice of the Basilica of St. Mark, where antiphonal choirs and orchestras were a regular usage. That even the initial response is given an extensive setting suggests that the occasion must have been a most festive one.

The absence of a *Magnificat* for such an occasion is only apparent. The *Magnificat* by Vivaldi for single chorus and orchestra is found in a version rewritten by the composer distributing the music between double choirs and orchestras, without really writing any new music for these forces. This rewriting, as opposed to the thoroughly antiphonal conception of some of the other pieces, suggests that the composer may have been pressed to complete the music for a service, and was forced hurriedly to rework a piece at hand. The

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[16] The choral works of this set are all recorded on Phillips, 6700116.

[17] While the feast of the Most Precious Blood was not placed upon the universal calendar until 1847, it is found already in the *Missale Romanum* (Venice: Andreas Poleti, 1740) as having been granted "pro toto clero Basilicae s. Marci Venetiarum et alibi," for the third Friday in March.

Confitebor tibi for alto, tenor, and bass with only one orchestra might have sufficed for such a service on the same grounds.[18]

One of the two *Salve Regina* settings could complete this solemn vespers for consisting of eight concerted pieces. The most apparent occasion for such a piece would have been the celebration of the anniversary of the dedication of the church, and it is entirely possible that Vivaldi provided a complete solemn vespers for such an occasion. The feast of the most Precious Blood, having been granted specifically to St. Mark's and other Venetian churches is also a likely possibility. In any case, it seems clear that the texts of his pieces were chosen to suit a liturgical order, and were not incidental concert pieces.

The fact that a piece has been composed for liturgical use does not demonstrate that it is more than just operatic music with a sacred text. Actually, Vivaldi's works use musical styles clearly recognizable as borrowed from the theatre and the concert hall. The question is only this, have they been suitably adapted to a sacred purpose? While the use of a sacred language and the replacement of dramatic action on stage by ceremonial action in the sanctuary may contribute to this transformation, there are ways in which the musical setting itself provides the text with an additional dimension of the sacred, and this by transforming elements of the current secular styles. These ways correspond to those discussed above: a work is made more sacred by embodying qualities that are particularly suitable to a sacred thing, and by using styles and forms that are understood as being intrinsically sacred. The best of Vivaldi's sacred liturgical works draw upon some secular styles and forms which derive from the instrumental concerto and the opera aria. Let us first look at the two secular forms as he used them, and then see how he transformed them for his sacred pieces.

The concerto was the main instrumental genre in which Vivaldi composed, and he is credited with having brought about a

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[18] Its group of lower soloists raises a question about its relation to the Ospidale, while its single orchestra does not fit the scheme of St. Mark's; without further information, its relationship to either scheme must remain less than conclusive.

clarification of the form of a typical first or last movement. This form consists of two kinds of material: (1) the ritornello, carried by the whole orchestra, is expository in nature, thematically succinct, and stable in key; each statement of it remains as a rule in one key and serves to project and confirm each of the main keys of the movement; (2) the solo episode is discursive in nature; its material is spun-out and elaborate, displaying the technical capabilities of the instrument; it is unstable in key and serves to modulate from the key of the previous ritornello to that of the next. Thus the scheme of a typical concerto movement might look like this:[19]

Ritornello	— solo episode —	Rit.	— episode —	Rit.	— episode —	Rit.
I	I → V	V	V → vi	vi	vi → I	I

The aria is the most typical piece of the baroque *opera seria*. Its musical shape is a realization of the late baroque aesthetic sometimes called *Affektenlehre*, or the doctrine of affections. By this theory, there are a limited number of "affections," idealized mental and emotional states which can be elicited by music. A particular affection is epitomized in a musical motive, and its expression consists of motivic extension and elaboration, which sustain the affection for the duration of the piece or section.

The dialogue and dramatic action of an *opera seria* takes place in the recitative. When a portion of this action is completed a particular dramatic situation exists. There is an affection, which in the course of the action itself would not last for more than a few seconds. It is the function of the aria to elaborate upon that affection and extend it for several minutes. The aria thus completely stops the action, and develops in depth the significance of the particular dramatic instant.

While the recitative states the text a single time with speech-like declamation, the aria is based upon large and small scale repetitions of the text. The largest repetition is that of the *da capo* form: after a long beginning section (A), there is a shorter contrasting section (B), and the initial section is repeated, usually

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[19] Kolneder, *Vivaldi*, p. 55.

with a considerable amount of ornamentation (A′); thus: ABA′. Each A section has an element of internal repetition as well, for its entire text is stated twice within the section. This provides the basis for a binary musical setting. Here the first statement of the text is set to a modulation to a nearly related key (usually the dominant or the relative minor), and the second section, after some harmonic complication, returns to the tonic.

Form of "A" section:	complete text	complete text
	I ➤ V	V ➤ I

Shorter repetitions within these phrases support the repetition and expansion of the musical motives.

This form was often enriched by a concerto-like addition of a ritornello, in which the two statements of text constituted the modulatory portions of a brief version of a concerto form. This has been called the grand *da capo* form.

Form of "A" section of grand *da capo* form:

Rit	complete text	Rit	complete text	Rit
I	I ➤ V	V	V ➤ I	I

The position of the *da capo* aria as a highly structured piece, in a closed form, and elaborating a single affection set it off in a striking manner from the recitative. Because of the return of its large A section, there is no question of any progress of dramatic action within it. Rather this return confirms for the listener the strong unity of the piece, and sets it off from the recitative, whose function is to create a sense of progression of the action.

How has Vivaldi used these elements of secular music in a particularly sacred way? It has been said above that a work of art might be considered sacred because its shape was conceived to express some quality of a sacred thing. This is particularly true of Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater*,[20] in which qualities of elevated mourning and compassion are delineated to reflect a progression of ideas in the text.

The sequence *Stabat Mater* fell from the liturgy in the reforms

following the Council of Trent. It was prescribed for the Mass of the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Friday after Passion Sunday, which Clement X (1670–76) granted to the city of Venice. The feast was extended to the universal Church in 1727. This sequence has a strophic text (consisting of like stanzas), and thus could also be sung as a hymn (each stanza to the same melody). Its long text was divided into three parts and each part assigned as the hymn for vespers (v. 1–10), matins (v. 11–14), and lauds (v. 15–10). Thus, when Vivaldi set the first ten verses only, he was not making a personal selection of the text, but most likely composing another piece to be sung at vespers. The Ospidale della Pietà was dedicated to the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, and one can imagine that in such an institution this hymn which had belonged to Venice by special privilege would have received particular attention and devotion from the young ladies and their teachers.

The first ten verses of the text as such have a particular shape. The piece begins by depicting the scene of the Sorrowful Mother in both exterior and interior aspects (v. 1–4); the significance of the scene both to the observer and to the Mother follows (v. 5–8); then the voice of the poem changes, and the narrator addresses Mary directly, asking to share her sorrow.

The musical shape of the piece reflects a view of this text: the verses are grouped as described above (1–4, 5–8, 9–10 plus the Amen) in sequences of three movements each; the music of the first group is repeated exactly for the second. The last group receives different music which is composed to place a specific emphasis on this portion of the piece. Thus the musical shape emphasizes the particular point where the text turns to make a first-person address to Mary, *Eia, mater*. The movements are grouped as follows:

[20] Antonio Vivaldi, *Stabat Mater, in La Musica Sacra di Antonio Vivaldi*, ed. Renato Fasano (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1969). The piece can be heard on a recording, Telefunken 641256.

Group 1:

I	II	III
v. 1: *Stabat mater*	v. 2: *Cuius animam*	v. 3: *O Quam tristis* v. 4: *Quae moerebat*
Largo: ritornello aria F minor	Adagissimo: form of a slow movement C minor	Andante: ritornello aria F minor

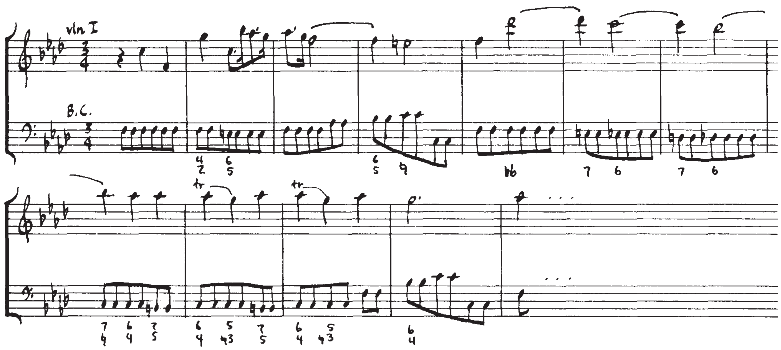
Group 2:

IV	V	VI
v. 5: *Quis est homo*	v. 6: *Quis non posset*	v. 7: *Pro peccatis* v. 8: *Vidit suum*
Largo: ritornello aria F minor	Adagissimo: form of a slow movement C minor	Andante: ritornello aria F minor

Group 3:

VII	VIII	IX
v. 9: *Eia, mater*	v. 10: *Fac ut ardeat*	*Amen.*
Largo: ritornello aria C minor	Lento: siciliana F minor	[Andante]: contra-puntal style F minor

The musical shape of the first two groups of three movements contributes to the sense of culmination upon the third group. In form these three movements together resemble a small concerto, the first and last being constructed with ritornello and episode, and the middle as a typical concerto slow movement. In tempo the third is the most animated, and the sense of increase of animation within the three movements, repeated with new text in the next three movements, creates an expectation for the listener which is fulfilled by the more intense music of the third group. Characteristic motives are used to project an affection of elevated sorrow. For example, that of the first movement is a descent of a fifth and a rise of a ninth (m. 1), followed by a chromatically descending bass line with suspensions over it (m. 5–8):



The last three movements form a culmination of the piece which sets the most personal statement of the text, *Eia mater*. The voice becomes more predominant and the string accompaniment more consistently intense, especially in its first movement. There follows a slow siciliana, known from the opera for expressing sorrow. The final movement recalls the style of the final movements of the first two groups, but adds the dimension of the contrapuntal style of the church sonata. The contrapuntal style provides a specifically sacred frame to the scene, and adds an element of objectivity which yet does not interrupt the high level of the expression of the piece.

Movements I, III, IV, VI, and VII are in a ritornello form; that is to say, they resemble the A section of a grand *da capo* aria with ritornelli and episodes, or a small version of the first or last movement of a concerto. For example,

Movement I:

Rit	complete text	Rit	repeat of text	Rit
i	i ➤ v	v	v ➤ i	i

Movement III:

Rit	verse 3	Rit	v 3	Rit	v. 4	Rit
i	i ➤ III	III	III ➤	v	v ➤ i	i

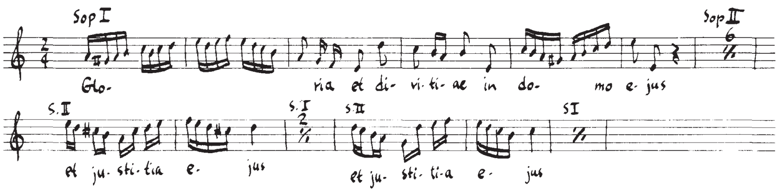
Their differences, however, are more striking. Contrary to the model of the opera aria, there is no contrasting B section or *da capo* in any of the arias, and the context of a dramatic recitative

is entirely absent. Contrary to the model of the concerto, the tempi are slow and the vocal writing (analogous to the solo episodes) is discreet and non-virtuosic. This gives the entire work an expression more contemplative than dramatic, and contains the intense sorrow with an elegance and restraint suitable to the Mother of God. This is the sense in which the secular elements have been transformed by the expression of a particular quality suitable to a sacred purpose.

Finally, a sacred work might be given a formal structure which is characteristically sacred. This is true of the psalm *Beatus vir* for two choirs. It is a festive setting of a psalm lasting about a half hour. The succession of individual psalm verses is well-suited to a baroque method of composition; each verse can be set to a single movement, and the idea of the verse realized by a characteristic style and affection. Vivaldi does this in fact, but he does more than this: the piece is integrated by a specifically sacred formal device. The work is punctuated by five repetitions of a ten-measure chorus, which first occurs as part of the setting of the first verse. It occurs between elaborate settings of the verses of the text, and musically it plays the role of an antiphon to the verses of the psalm. It recalls the ritornello in the concerto, but with this important difference: the ritornello of a concerto serves to emphasize a series of organic key relationships, recurring in successively different keys. This antiphon recurs always in the same key and serves as a tonal point of reference that articulates the succession of individual verses as separate entities. In this it serves the same function as an antiphon which is repeated after individual verses of a psalm.

There is another feature of this piece that could be called antiphonal in a more fundamental sense. The two equal sides of a choir are the basis of the antiphonal division in singing liturgical music. It was from this liturgical practice that the elaborate system of antiphonal choirs and orchestras at St. Mark's in Venice developed very directly. Thus a setting for double choir and orchestra represents a formal organization characteristic of liturgical music. This particular setting is even more "antiphonal" than might be expected, for the internal phrase construction is even based upon this alternation of sides. For example, the aria

Gloria et divitiae consists of a thorough system of alternation, phrase by phrase:



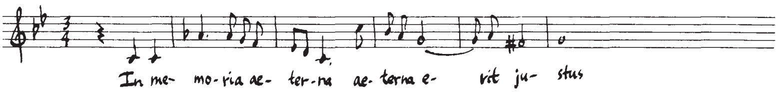
The aria *Potens in terra* on the other hand is constructed by placing the two solo voices in canon, a device that also reflects the division between two sides.

A peculiar characteristic of this work is that according to Vivaldi's prescription, there are no real solos in the piece. What appears in style to be difficult solo material is in fact consistently prescribed for all of the members of a section. Thus *Gloria et divitiae* is for the sopranos of choir one in alternation with those of choir two. Unison singing is characteristic of sacred music, and uncharacteristic of opera. The unison assignment of a part may create a slightly greater anonymity and sense of the objective and less emphasis upon the singer as an individual.

Other verses not dividing the choirs are set to the ecclesiastical style, that is, in imitative counterpoint. Here the subjects in imitation represent the affections of their texts. For example, the orchestral introduction to *Exortum est in tenebris* projects the idea of rising, both in its subject and in the overall shape of the point of imitation.



The subject of another movement in imitative counterpoint resembles music that might be found in a setting of a Requiem, and appropriately so, for its text is *In memoria aeterna erit justus*.



The final movement of *Beatus vir*,[21] the *Gloria Patri*, is the culmination of the work. It recalls the subject of the antiphon, stating it in long notes, cantus-firmus fashion while the other voices make elaborate counterpoint with it. This movement summarizes the festivity of the whole piece by recalling the introductory fanfare-like material from the beginning of the work; it ties it in to the antiphonal process by embodying the melody of the antiphon, and it closes it with a movement well-saturated with learned counterpoint.

This discussion of the relation of secular and sacred elements in Vivaldi's music raises some general questions. While the musical forms have been adapted to suit sacred purposes, some of the musical idioms seem to be identical with those of operatic music. Could the melody line of *Gloria et divitiae* really be given over to an aria whose text addressed a secular potentate and praised him for the splendor of his worldly court? It seems entirely possible. The question is, however, what of this splendor is intrinsic to the music? The answer is, I believe, in the fact that the affection expressed is an idealized one. Its function is not to increase the specific things expressed in the text, but to raise them to a universal level of significance.

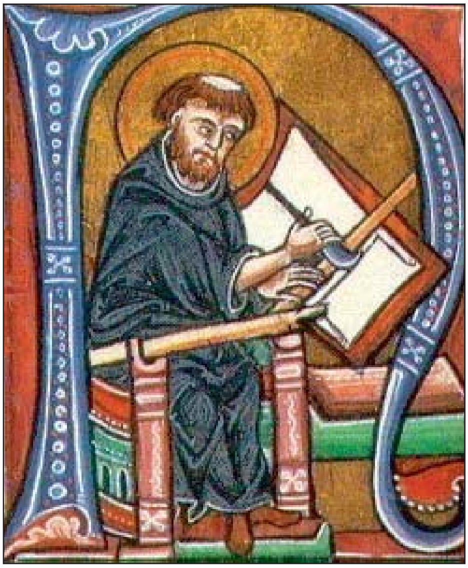
Another question might be raised—that of the length of the works. How can you justify music which extends a service—which if sung in chant lasts half an hour—to two or three hours in length? The answer is quite simple, but very important. It justifies itself, if the hearer is able to follow it properly. If the prayerful reception of the texts of the psalms is extended to such a length, then the work is an enormous success. The hearing of a baroque

[21] Antonio Vivaldi, *Beatus vir in due cori,* in *La Musica Sacra di Antonio Vivaldi*, ed. Renato Fasano (Milano: Universal Edition, 1972).

setting of a psalm verse is akin to a meditation upon it, which deepens and enriches one's understanding and appreciation of the text. If the music can sustain the momentary intuition of the beauty of a sacred text and the ideas it represents for a substantial amount of time, then a sacred purpose has been accomplished. My own personal observation bears this out. After having sung vespers on Sundays for several years, and known the text well, and even read some extensive commentaries on it, I began to study Vivaldi's setting of *Beatus vir*. I heard some live performances of it and listened to some recordings as well. Now, when that psalm is sung to the chant again, the depth and richness of its meaning is easily recalled. The experience of the extended work is retained and adds a substantial dimension by recall to the simplest singing of the text.

Finally, what about the feasibility of liturgical performance of such works? A most festive occasion in a large city church might well be adorned with such music. It might be particularly appropriate on the day of the dedication of the church, when there is no obligation of Mass for the people. As with the use of other festive liturgical music, the ceremonial for such an occasion should be the equal of the music. For a beginning, a work of modest proportions could be chosen, such as one of Mozart's vespers. Such larger works as those of Monteverdi or Vivaldi should also be possible eventually. With proper preparation, the people should see such a service to be an occasion of festive worship and not just a concert; they should hear it as sacred and liturgical music.

COMMENTARY



27

THE SACRED

Our liturgical choices depend upon our understanding of what sacred means, particularly in music, because many contend that there is no such thing as sacred or non-sacred music. Many years ago, Msgr. Schuler contended that notes are not sacred, but it is the associations of music which bring to it the connotation of sacred. I would like to explore that notion, placing it in the context of "reception."

We have two similar words in English, but they have important differences: "Sacred" and "holy," Latin has similar, but not quite identical words, *sacer* and *sanctus*. "Sacred" is a participle, expressing the object of some action; something sacred has been set aside, dedicated to a particular and noble purpose. "Holy," on the other hand, refers to the intrinsic aspect of the other, a quality of being whole, complete, perfect, even health-giving, saving. We call a saint holy, but a bishop sacred, the Mass holy, but the liturgy sacred. "Sacred," then, emphasizes a substantial component of reception—things not naturally taken to be sacred can become so by usage; it concerns things that have been set aside for the service of the holy. But there is another consideration: Some things are

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more apt for the service of the holy than others; their characteristics are congruent with their sacred use.

The reception of sacred things can be one of two different kinds. Take, for instance, the vestment used for Mass, the chasuble. It was in Roman times a normal outer garment; presumably, it was worn by the priest when he said Mass. In the course of time, it became obsolete as a conventional garment but was retained by the priest celebrating Mass, and so ultimately it became received as an exclusively sacred garment. Thus, something originally secular can be assimilated to a sacred context by gradual reception. This is not all, however; the chasuble is apt for its purpose, because it is an encompassing garment, covering the whole body, symbolizing the transformation of the priest into an *alter Christus*. Moreover, in the process of sacralization of the garment, it takes on more sacred characteristics: its form becomes more ample, the materials chosen for it become more precious (traditionally silk), and it takes on sacred symbols. This is, then, a matter of the evolution of a gradual reception, a transformation of something secular into something unambiguously sacred.

The other kind of reception is of things perceived as always having been sacred, since time immemorial. Incense is an example of that. Incense was already used in the Hebrew temple, and in spite of the theories of some rationalists that its purpose was to cover the stink of animal sacrifice (which it may have done), its stated sacred purpose was to represent the ascent of prayer; see Psalm 140:2, *dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo* (let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight). It is apt for its purpose, because it visually ascends; its fragrance is unlike anything else, and so it can be easily recognized as set aside; it is a precious material, the immolation of which constitutes a worthy sacrifice, and its use is ample. There are those who would say that it came to the Western Church from the Byzantine court, which was a secular one; the Byzantine Emperor, however, was received very much as a sacred person, and the use of incense there must also have been sacred.

I draw this distinction between those things always received as sacred and those whose reception evolves gradually, because the same distinction can be drawn with music. Gregorian chant

has always been received as sacred; the early fathers of the church jealously guarded the sacredness of the music of its liturgy, and though this is pure speculation, its earliest stages were probably based upon Jewish precedent, also sacred. Over its history, it has maintained the distinction of being exclusively sacred; even though it may be quoted occasionally in concert music, its presence there serves to bring an element of the sacred to the concert. Moreover, its musical style is apt for sacred use: its non-metric rhythm conveys a sense of transcending the temporal limits of the here and now; its unison singing represents a unified voice, suitable to its sacred usage; its most melismatic forms are so ample as to preclude its employment for any mundane purpose; and its intimate link with the texts and actions of the sacred liturgy identify it with the sacred purposes of the liturgy. Its unambiguous sacred reception forms, then, a bedrock of the sacred in the liturgy.

Sacred polyphony evolved out of Gregorian chant, elaborating several voice parts upon the sacred chant melodies. But it had an important interaction with the secular; once the process of elaboration upon chant was developed, whether it was in a *cantus firmus* style or in thorough-going imitation, it was employed in both sacred and secular contexts. The interaction of the sacred and secular in music came to an important point with the Renaissance Mass, in which a secular piece, whether monophonic or polyphonic, could be the basis of a Mass. This is often cited as evidence of a lack of distinction between sacred and secular in the Renaissance, but I would contend that it is evidence of a more important process. A Mass based upon a tune such as "L'Homme armé," incorporates that tune in long notes—a *cantus firmus*, and in an intricate and learned polyphonic texture. It is no longer just the tune, but a part of a larger whole, whose sacred character is unmistakable. Thus, the secular has been sacralized, turned to a sacred purpose through an apt stylistic transformation.

This is entirely appropriate to a Christian world view. The sacred is not something merely separated from the world; rather the sacred transforms elements of the world to a transcendent purpose. The Eucharist is the most outstanding example: what was ordinary food for the Hebrews was transformed into the

Passover meal; this, in turn was transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Bread and wine, elements of natural nourishment, progressively became transcendent, supernatural, saving nourishment. In my study of the Medieval Sarum Rite of England, I concluded that, contrary to the theorists of comparative religion, who looked to the opposition of sacred and profane (in the sense of secular), the medieval (and Christian) sense of the sacred was that the important differences were between the more sacred and the less sacred, and the continuity of these was more important than their opposition.

In music, the transformation of elements of our ordinary world conveys the message that our ordinary lives can also be transformed. The hitch is: what if the incorporation of music into the liturgy does not involve a discernable transformation? What if the use of styles clearly identifiable with worldly and secular purposes retain their identity in liturgical use? Is the message, then, that there is no transformation? that the secular life-styles are all that there is? I would contend that this is the danger of the present use of secular styles, since the instruments they use, their vocal styling, their simplistic musical construction all retain their secular identity. Rather, it is crucial that whatever musical styles are used in the liturgy, there be clear elements of their sacralization, that their incorporation is unambiguously for the sake of transformation into something sacred. The regular use of a few pieces of Gregorian chant and of sacred polyphony can be enough to signal that difference, to inspire a congregation to higher purposes in their participation in the liturgy.

I am reminded of the principal Sunday Mass as a certain Midwestern cathedral; I attended it some five years ago, and there was a typical repertory of music in popular styles, some of the latest compositions for the Ordinary of the Mass, all accompanied by a heterogeneous and not particularly excellent instrumental group—piano, flute, drums, string bass, guitar—that gave a rather "scrappy" tone to the whole proceeding. It was clear that the musicians were dedicated, but the total effect was ambiguous and unfocused. I returned to that Mass last year, and heard an excellent organ in the loft played by an expert organist. The priest sang most of his parts, and a choir provided some worthy attempts at

sacred polyphony. Much of the music was the same as the time before, but now the priest's singing, the organ accompaniment, and the presence of sacred polyphony gave a sense of purpose and focus that was entirely different. It was not the ideal, but in it the ideal was discernable, and in my view, that is real progress, a kind of progress we are now witnessing in many places.

28

IT'S THE MUSIC

The Winter volume presents several articles pertaining to the aesthetics of sacred music. They represent a variety of points of view, and the discussion will surely go beyond the present articles. This ongoing discussion is crucial to our efforts, since of all the arts, music is most intimately linked with the sacred liturgy. Understanding the role of music in the liturgy requires not only knowledge of the principles of liturgy, but also an understanding of why the music, as an integral part of the liturgy, must be excellent, must be beautiful. There is thus a particularly important issue of practical musical aesthetics—judging the music itself.

The cause of judgments about music is mission territory. Most frequently, liturgy is judged by its texts, and whatever music happens to set the text is just accepted. My point is that the music itself must be judged as music, it must be suitable to the liturgy as music and the music itself must serve the purposes of the liturgy. Indeed, although the Subcommittee on Music of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy is addressing the issue of principles for making a judgment about hymns to be approved, these principles will

The article appeared in *Sacred Music* 138, no. 2 (2011).

only pertain to the choice of texts, not the music. This may be a mercy, since it is difficult to conceive how an agreement might be reached on the music. Still, general principles for judging the music, I would insist, are as important as those for the text.

Emphasis upon the text alone has a long history. Over the centuries, there has been a shift from the understanding of liturgical actions, such as an introit, as an action for which there is an integral accompanying chant, to actions for which there is an appropriate text, paralleling a shift from an oral to a written conception. This in turn relates to a shift in the conception of what a liturgical action is.

There are at least two distinct levels at which one can speak of liturgical action. The liturgical action of the Mass as a whole is the action of Christ, making a sacrificial offering to the Father on our behalf. Its prime object of address is the Father: "Te, igitur, clementissime Pater." Latin felicitously can place "Te" first for emphasis, while our present translation begins with "We." A deep understanding of the direction of this basic action could bring about a shift from the prevailing anthropocentric emphasis in much practice of liturgy to a theocentric one. If this shift were agreed upon, the practice of music would be transformed.

A second level of speaking of liturgical action is to speak of the discrete liturgical actions—each individual part of the liturgy is an action: a procession, a reading, a litany, etc. In the high Mass sung in Gregorian chant—sanctioned by the council as the "normative" liturgy—each of these actions has its own musical shape. It is not just that each is accompanied by its own music, but the music is an integral part of each action and serves to differentiate that action from the others.

Therefore, the "choice" of the music which sets these actions is crucial. A fundamental difficulty in *Musicam Sacram* is that it allowed *alius cantus aptus*, other suitable music, to replace the proper chants of the Mass, and in practice, this has driven out the propers of the Mass. It must be acknowledged that this kind of substitution had been prepared by a common practice before the council—the requirement of singing the texts proper to the Mass was minimally fulfilled by singing each proper part to psalm tones. This is very useful: since the melodies of the psalm tones are well

known and very simple, the entire proper of the Mass can be rehearsed in a matter of a few minutes, the requirement of singing the texts is fulfilled, and the singing creates a generally sacred atmosphere—since psalm tones have no place in secular music, all can easily be identified as sacred. Yet something essential is missing—they are all the same; an introit is sung in exactly the same way as an alleluia, despite the remarkable difference in liturgical function, a difference which the music of Gregorian melodies makes clear.

The same could be said of the pieces of the *Graduale simplex*, whether they are sung in Latin or in English (as from, for example, *By Flowing Waters*). These melodies are borrowed from the divine office, where their musical shape is suited to their function there: antiphons whose simple style serves as a melodic complement to the efficient chanting of an entire psalm on a simple psalm tone, short responsories whose scope is to provide a complement to a short lesson of one verse from the scripture. In the singing of the Mass, their brevity keeps them from projecting the solemnity required, and their similar styles keeps them from showing much differentiation between very different parts of the Mass. Thus they do not quite come up to the tasks that the genuine Gregorian Mass propers really fulfill.

A similar argument applies even more emphatically in the case of "songs" sung at Mass from the common hymnals currently in use. Take a specific case in point. A question and answer column in a national Catholic weekly recently addressed a question: Is it suitable to sing "Let There Be Peace on Earth" at Mass? Since it was first sung at the United Nations, it is a patriotic song, and therefore might not be suitable to the liturgy. The answer was that since the text speaks of peace on earth, and this is something we pray for at Mass, it must be appropriate. No mention of its music. In fact, the melody is not in the style of a patriotic song, but rather of a Broadway musical—a show tune! There is nothing wrong with it in its own place, but it is sheer entertainment music, participating in stereotyped and clichéd formulae, representing limited emotions suited to limited dramatic situations, stroking the listener with a tune that does little more than confirm his own unreflective response to that part of the show. Curiously, this is

functional music, but the function does not transcend the limits of the genre, does not lift the listener's awareness to any higher purpose. I am saying this about the *music* and not the text, and this is precisely my point; even when music sets a significant text, the music itself carries particular meaning and value. In the case of a song for Mass in the style of a Broadway tune, and in the case of setting all the propers of the Mass to the same psalm tone or a brief office chant, the music has contributed only a modicum of real value. True, the congregation participates in the peace song and enjoys it; true, the psalm tone propers convey an overall sense of the sacred in the action as a whole. Admittedly, the chants from the *Graduale simplex* are a distinct improvement over the psalm-tone propers. Under particular circumstances, these might well be the best available choice, a relative good, particularly for choirs or scholas just beginning to work on the propers of the Mass. Still, it should be a reluctant choice, since it is only "singing at Mass," but not "singing the Mass."

The columnist's answer should have been, even though there are laudable sentiments in the text, the music is in the style of entertainment music and not entirely appropriate. Rather, a higher purpose should be the goal—to sing the Mass in a way that makes it unambiguous that each of its parts serves its own distinct role and contributes to a multi-layered sacred action, an integral part of the transcendent action of Christ himself.

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AESTHETICS REVISITED

The music of the St. Louis Jesuits was the subject of an extended discussion by Jeffrey Tucker, reviewing a book commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of their collaboration.[1] Prof. Eleonore Stump, a distinguished professor of philosophy at St. Louis University—author of a book on St. Thomas Aquinas and a colleague of Fr. John Foley, S.J., one of the original five St. Louis Jesuits—took exception to Tucker's treatment of the phenomenon. In subsequent correspondence with Tucker, she offered us an essay, a serious discussion of religion and aesthetics, which we gratefully accepted.[2]

Some readers questioned our publishing the essay, thinking that it constituted an endorsement by *Sacred Music* or the CMAA of the music of the St. Louis Jesuits, even though I had introduced the issue by saying that there would be a variety of views presented, and that the discussion would surely continue beyond the particular articles. I would like to continue that discussion briefly

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[1] Jeffrey Tucker, "The Mystery of the St. Louis Jesuits," *Sacred Music*, 133, no. 3 (2006), 27–36.

[2] Eleonore Stump, "Beauty as a Road to God," *Sacred Music*, 134, no. 4 (2007), 13–26.

now, in part to assure our readers of our position, but more importantly to address some points in Prof. Stump's essay and some decisive issues she did not address.

Prof. Stump distinguishes between a "Pythagorean" or intellectual analysis of beauty and an "incarnational" or emotional approach, but this is a false dichotomy. The "Pythagorean" approach to music explains the basis of music's beauty in harmony—not just the harmony of the chords of conventional music but the overall harmonious motion in music, whether it be harmonic or contrapuntal music or even pure unaccompanied melody, a harmonious motion that suggests to us the constitution of all things by the Creator in an ordered and purposeful state, such that we are moved to contemplate the beauty of creation in the hearing of the music. And yet it is this very harmony which we enjoy and which is the basis of the emotion we feel in the enjoyment of the music. It is an integral experience and deserves consideration and analysis as such.

Yet perhaps "enjoyment" is not the best word; I prefer the word "delight," because it better represents the synthesis of sensible pleasure with the sense of wonder at the nature of harmonious order, a pleasure that is at one and the same time incarnational and contemplative; it better represents the synthesis of these two complementary aspects of the experience of beauty. It is crucial for sacred music that our aesthetic sense transcend simple enjoyment and seek those aspects of harmony that remind us of the Creator.

Prof. Stump's enlightening explication of how the beauty of music may serve as a road to God curiously uses examples which are usually experienced in concert rather than liturgy, and this fact makes her argument not quite as applicable as it might be. It is true that she speaks of a number of works of sacred music, but while the Verdi Requiem is unquestionably "sacred" music, and even while it is in a liturgical form, it is better viewed as sacred concert music than as liturgical music. So what is the difference between sacred music in general and genuinely liturgical music? The answer given by the liturgical documents of the church is that it sets the texts of the Mass itself, particularly the propers of the Mass, and that its musical styles differentiate the functions

served by the particular liturgical acts it sets—that it constitutes the *splendor formae* of the liturgy itself. It is the singing of the Mass, not just singing at Mass. Gregorian chant fulfills these conditions for liturgical music, while music in popular styles does not. This is why Jeffrey Tucker argues that Gregorian chant should resume its place as the normative music of the Roman Rite.

Prof. Stump objects to blocking certain kinds of music from the liturgy that are meaningful to some people, without recognizing that this is exactly Tucker's complaint as well. In the wake of music in styles pioneered by the St. Louis Jesuits, Gregorian chant—the normative music of the Roman Rite—was effectively eliminated from the liturgy. Tucker rejoices at the signs of its return, however gradual at the moment. But this is not because it is just the music he enjoys, and it is certainly not the imposition by the privileged and elite of their own taste upon the less fortunate. It is rather the restoration to its proper place of the music that has always been inherent to the rite itself. It may be that a return to Gregorian chant will at first be "enjoyed" less by those accustomed to popular styles; but the gradual restoration of chants to our liturgy will constitute the education in a sacred tradition that should be the birthright of every Catholic. This is surely an act of charity and not a violation of charity.

This brings me to the issue of the sacred and to two aspects of the sacred in music for the liturgy. One is that things sacred retain their sacredness by continuity with tradition. One reason—not the only one—we understand things as sacred is that we grew up with them. Thomas Day points out that *Glory and Praise*, a "song book" espousing the styles the St. Louis Jesuits cultivated, "did not contain anything pre-conciliar: not a single chant or hymn . . . a repudiation of the past in every respect."

The other aspect of the sacred is that it requires some (not complete, to be sure) separation from the secular. But the music of the St. Louis Jesuits is replete with reference to secular styles—indeed, I suspect that this is a reason for some of its popularity. I remember hearing a St. Louis song that imitated the style of a piece by the Kingston Trio; the Kingston piece ended "and he'll ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston," and the St. Louis piece so clearly recalled that passage that I came away from Mass singing, "and

he'll ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston," not the desired result. We cannot escape the fact that musical styles bear associations; good composers use them with purpose and sophistication. But church music based upon pop styles risks giving the wrong message: sacred music should say this is the most transcendent thing you can do, the workshop of God, and it is expressed through transcendent music; music in pop styles may say this music is just like the music of everyday, and this experience is an everyday one. Moreover, in the case of the incorporation of present popular styles, the values that the popular music represents may be quite in conflict with those of the liturgy.

Some found Catherine Pickstock's article difficult;[3] I did myself. But for me its real value was to show that one of the great composers of the past century held a metaphysical attitude to the music he composed. Messiaen's ordering of his music was based upon making it reflect patterns observable in external reality, thus realizing that notion of harmony I mentioned above.

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[3] Catherine Pickstock, "God and Meaning in Music: Messiaen, Deleuze, and the Musico-Theological Critique of Modernism and Postmodernism," *Sacred Music*, 134, no. 4 (2007), 40–62.

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LANGUAGES OF THE LITURGY

The new English translations of the *Missale Romanum* have now received the recognitio from Rome, thus authorizing their use. It has been a long process: some ten years from the date of *Liturgiam Authenticam*[1]—which established new principles for translation—and their practical implementation in the liturgy, evidently on the First Sunday of Advent, 2011.

The impetus for a new translation was principally accuracy: the translations we have used since 1969 were said to be imprecise, sometimes only paraphrases,[2] and to omit important aspects of the

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[1] Fifth Instruction for the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, *Liturgiam Authenticam: On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy* (Vatican: Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 2001).

[2] For example, the first Eucharistic acclamation, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again," was given as a translation of "Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec venias." While its mention of death, resurrection, and return makes a nice symmetry with past, present, and future tenses, it has changed the object of address: just at the moment of the Lord's being made present, the text changes the second person address of Christ to a third person mention of him, as if he were not present.

original texts. But accuracy is not the only concern in judging a translation: while language principally communicates information, it also has many other functions, particularly in the liturgy. This is true of the Latin texts of the missal as well as of any good vernacular translation.

For the original Latin of the liturgy, a recent study has put the issue succinctly: "Language is more than just a means of communication; it is also a medium of expression."[3] Drawing upon the extensive work of Christine Mohrmann,[4] Uwe Michael Lang has essayed the range of meanings that a text of the Latin liturgy carries. He proposes a continuum from comprehension to expression: "Sacred language . . . reduces the element of comprehension in favor of other elements, notably that of expression."[5] "It is a specific way of organizing religious experience . . . , the medium of expression . . . not just of individuals, but of a community living according to certain traditions . . . , stylized and removed from contemporary language."[6]

A sacred language is distinct from ordinary language, conservative, using certain foreign words as hallmarks of the sacred, and employing rhetorical figures characteristic of oral style. Texts of the liturgy which serve different functions, e.g., reading versus prayer, show different stylistic characteristics. For an epistle, the text is mainly for communication; for a prayer, for expression. The Canon of the Mass, for example, uses a high, somewhat ornate language; Romans never spoke in this style in everyday usage, but it was suitable to the central prayer of the Mass.[7]

The five texts of the sung Ordinary of the Mass can illustrate such differences. Each has its own linguistic structure, use of

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[3] Uwe Michael Lang, "Rhetoric of Salvation: The Origins of Latin as the Language of the Roman Liturgy," in *The Genius of the Roman Rite: Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives on Catholic Liturgy*, ed. Lang, Hillenbrand Books (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2010), pp. 22–44; at 22.

[4] Particularly *Liturgical Latin: Its Origins and Character: Three Lectures* (London: Burns & Oates, 1959).

[5] Lang, "Rhetoric of Salvation," 23.

[6] Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 10–11.

[7] Lang, "Rhetoric of Salvation," 26.

archaic words, and patterns of repetition, which differ subtly from those of the others. In most there is a notable organization around groups of three—a perfect number, which particularly represents the Trinity.

The Kyrie is a pure litany; it has little variation, but rather symmetrical repetition, traditionally three by three.[8] Its earliest form had an indefinite number of repetitions, but by Carolingian times, it had settled to symmetrical, three-fold statements. Being in Greek,[9] it alludes to the antiquity of the act of begging mercy, linking the present speakers with the whole history of the church back to New Testament times. Such archaic language gives an element of beauty as well as a hieratic character.

The Gloria is a hymn of praise, with a middle section in the form of a litany.[10] Its first line is a direct quotation from the Nativity story in the Gospel of St. Luke (2:14), the song of the angels upon the birth of Jesus, and thus it is sometimes called the Angelic Hymn. Once the quotation from St. Luke has been stated, there follows a series of symmetrical repetitions; first four brief acclamations ("Laudamus te" and following); then invocations addressing the Father and Son under the aspect of ample divine names, three sets of three-fold names ("Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens" and following); then a three-fold litany ("Qui tollis peccata mundi" and following); and a conclusion, triple acclamations of praise to Christ ("Tu solus sanctus" and following) then expanded to conclude the hymn with a Trinitarian doxology by reference to the Holy Spirit. The Gloria has sometimes been claimed to be a Trinitarian text, and some

[8] In the ordinary form, the Kyrie is normally three pairs, six-fold. In my opinion, this was arranged in order to make the dialogue between priest and people symmetrical in the low Mass. The rubrics allow greater repetition, and so I always recommend keeping the older nine-fold scheme of repetition when singing a through-composed Kyrie.

[9] An amusing story is told about the Greek Kyrie: A children's choir was being observed by a liturgical expert, who commented, "Why do they sing in Greek? they cannot know what it means; little girl, what does 'Kyrie eleison' mean?" "Why, sir, it means 'Domine, miserere.'"

[10] "Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis," and the following.

early and medieval sources have an extra mention of the Holy Spirit in the middle; but in its most fundamental form it is, instead, incarnational; it is basically a text addressing the Father and the Son. Its first use in the Mass was not surprisingly in the liturgy of Christmas—recall that the proper chants of the Midnight Mass of Christmas all speak of the eternal begetting of the Son from the Father, and the gospel for the Mass in the Day is the beginning of St. John's gospel, linking the eternal begetting with the incarnation. The Trinitarian element is only in the concluding doxology, as is customary with a hymn. There are thus three sets of addresses to God, each consisting of three-fold repetitions, clearly the use of the symbolic number; this repetition goes far beyond the demands of mere communication and in a formal way expresses the ecstasy of addressing the Almighty, Father and Son, and finally Holy Spirit; it is thus an intrinsic element of the beauty of the text. Fortunately, this structure has been restored in the new translation.

The Credo is a very different text; it is the agreed-upon teaching from fourth-century councils and constitutes a comprehensive statement of fundamental Catholic belief. It consists of a series of propositions, discrete but well ordered, concerning first the Father, then the Son, then the Holy Spirit, and finally in a nutshell, the church, the sacraments, and the last things. There is a central focal point, however. After statements about the Father and the Son in themselves, it turns to the aspect of the Son that relates to us: "Et incarnatus est"; here the congregation kneels or bows in reverence to the mystery of the incarnation. This gives the whole text a point of division that is an extra element of expression and formal articulation over and above the Trinitarian structure. There is little rhetoric to this text; rather, its purpose is clearly the profession of belief in doctrinal terms.

The Sanctus is the most hieratic of all the ordinary texts, referring back to the vision of Isaiah—the Seraphim crying each to the other in three-fold acclamation, "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Isa. 6:3). It includes twice the Hebrew word, "Osanna." Formally it consists of five parts: Sanctus, Pleni, Osanna, Benedictus, and Osanna. The number five is an important number in the Canon of the

Mass—during which the Sanctus is sung in the extraordinary form—representing the number of Christ's wounds. The repetition of Osanna gives it an extra symmetry as well.

The Agnus Dei can be called a litany: like the Kyrie, it originally had an indefinite number of repetitions; since Carolingian times, it has consisted of three petitions, the first two ending in "miserere nobis," the third in "dona nobis pacem." The expressive structure of its repetition is cumulative: "dona nobis pacem" brings it to a desirable conclusion, which in turn forms a poignant preparation for communion.

Each of these five texts has a different purpose in the liturgy, a different structure, different usages of archaic words and numerical symbolism, and a different rhetorical style; these support the various liturgical functions of the pieces, with the Credo near the communication end of the continuum and the Gloria near the expression end.

The principal use of these texts was, and still should be, as sung texts,[11] and so one might inquire how their Gregorian melodies show aspects of communication and expression. In the relation of music to text, the melody either realizes aspects of the text or it goes beyond anything implicit in the text. Both of these things can be seen in the Gregorian melodies for the Ordinary of the Mass.

The Credo is the text which carries the most information; its melody is the simplest, easily presenting the text in an objective way. Still, in the case of Credo I—the "authentic" melody, the one which has been sung the most over the longest span of time—there is a subtle shift of the melody, so that the most expressive figure, which includes the half-step a to b-flat, occurs in close repetition on the most intensely human parts of the text, that central point of the Credo at which the congregation bows or kneels, "et homo factus est," and then "Crucifixus." Thus

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[11] "Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people," *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶113.

within the conventional melodic formulae a subtle shift of emphasis gives a focus that orients the whole piece, at the same place in which the text receives the emphasis: the gesture of adoration.

One might think that the ideal setting of "Kyrie eleison" would be a typical litany melody, such as that sung for the litany of the saints, syllabic and stark. From this point of view, the melodies of the Kyrie of the Mass could not in the farthest stretch of the imagination have been anticipated. For the more solemn days of the year, the Kyrie melodies are melismatic and elaborate. There is a symmetry in the melody, which mirrors the shift from "Kyrie" to "Christe" and back again, represented in the scheme ABA, but in addition there is the use of extended melisma, long series of notes on single syllables. These melodies do not at all represent the literal meaning of the text, but add to it expressions ranging from solemn deprecation to exuberant confidence.

On the other hand, the melodies for the Gloria—a longer text—do not extend the text very much. Rather, they often emphasize its larger-scale formal distinctions. In general, they set the four acclamations to one kind of melody, then another for the invocations, another for the petitions, and again another for the concluding acclamations; each set of triple phrases is thus distinguished as a set by its melody. This most expressive text of the ordinary is thus treated with some circumspection, allowing it to speak for itself and articulating its larger-scale form.

The melodies for the Sanctus generally begin with a striking gesture, often with some notable melodic skips, which suitably express the hieratic character of the text. Its form is also projected by setting Pleni and Benedictus to similar melodies and both Osannas to the same melody, thus clarifying the symmetry of the text through the music.

The text of the Agnus Dei has a similar symmetry. Several of its settings simply repeat the same melody for each of the three petitions (AAA). Others aid the symmetry in a formal way by making the middle petition contrast with the outer ones (ABA). Still others capitalize upon the difference of the third petition by making it be something of a climactic statement (AAB).

Music shows an aspect of language in that it clarifies phrase and sentence structure and adds elements of connotation, context, and expression. These are, of course, also expressive elements in the language of the text itself. *Liturgiam Authenticam* is clear on their necessity: in addition to the exact denotation of the words, a translation should maintain the connotation of the words, "that is, the finer shades of meaning and emotion evoked by them."[12] When possible, the translation should also maintain those aspects of oral style which can achieve effects similar to those of the original, such as

> recurring and recognizable patterns of syntax and style, a solemn or exalted tone, alliteration and assonance, concrete and vivid images, repetition, parallelisms and contrast, a certain rhythm, and at times, the lyric of poetic compositions.[13]

Texts to be sung "convey to the faithful a sense of the solemnity of the celebration and manifest unity in faith and charity by means of a unity of voices."[14] All of these things are clarified, enhanced, emphasized, by being set to music. In a sense the music is ancillary to the text, but in another sense, the music is absolutely fundamental, for it brings to a finer focus those things which are implicit in the text.

New English translations pose questions: Do they fulfill expectations on the affective and expressive side? Will their expressive potentials be realized in worthy musical settings? Already new versions of the hackneyed repertory of the recent past have been ground out for the new translations; can we not do better by taking advantage of the occasion by beginning to provide melodies for the ordinary worthy of its high purpose and function in the celebration of Mass? A closer dialogue between the excellent tradition of Latin ordinaries and their English counterparts should be promoted by employing both in the actual

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[12] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, ¶52.

[13] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, ¶59.

[14] *Liturgiam Authenticam*, ¶61.

liturgies; this would be instructive from all points of view. The need of the Hispanic communities for settings in their own languages should also not be overlooked.

The new translations are better, more accurate, but also a shade more beautiful. May they inspire all to attain a higher standard in what we ask our congregations to sing.

31

AD ORIENTEM AND MUSIC

In our discussion of the American bishops' document on music, *Sing to the Lord*, anthropocentric and theocentric emphases in liturgy were contrasted: anthropocentric, man-centered, focusing upon the congregation's actions; theocentric, God-centered, focusing upon God as the object of worship. It is not a question of an exclusive choice of one or the other, but a proper balance and priority between them. There is, however, a center which transcends the contrast—Christ: the liturgy is Christocentric; it is the action of Christ offering himself to the Father. As the action of the Body of Christ, the whole church offers, it is in that sense anthropocentric; but, being offered to the Father, it is more importantly theocentric. The synthesis of the two poles is centered upon Christ, true man and true God.

As sacred liturgy, the Mass has a transcendent object—almighty God—and an ultimate goal—happiness with him. But since the liturgy takes place in the here and now, these aspects of transcendence must be expressed in human terms, using human means. Two of the means, space and time, give rise to two important aspects of liturgy—the stance of the priest at the altar and sacred music.

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Traditionally churches were "oriented"; they faced East. The priest stood before the altar, facing East as well. This was because the rising sun in the East was seen as a symbol of Christ—the direction toward which he ascended and from which he will come again. This direction was East, no matter where in the world the church was located; thus, in contradistinction to Jerusalem or Mecca, which were geographic directions of prayer, the Christian direction was a transcendent one, not being focused upon any earthly focal point.

After the Second Vatican Council, priests often faced the people, thus facing West in such churches. It is true that documents prescribed that when new churches were constructed, altars should be placed so that it was possible to celebrate Mass facing the people; still, this was not required. Indeed, the language of the Roman Missal, even the edition of 2002, seems to assume the opposite as a norm, since at several points it directs the priest to turn around and address the people.

The posture facing the people has often been justified by the apparent precedent of the Roman basilicas, including St. Peter's, where the pope has always faced the people at Mass, even in the rite of Trent. However, this stance is not a precedent for facing the people elsewhere, but just another instance of facing East, for these basilicas followed classical Roman custom and faced West. Louis Bouyer, Klaus Gamber, and others have questioned this precedent, conceding that at prayer the priest did face the people, but contending that the people also faced East, turning away from the priest.

Pope Benedict, when he wrote as Cardinal Ratzinger, wrote about the posture *ad orientem*. He spoke about addressing the symbol of Christ, but he added another forceful rationale: Early Christian churches frequently had great apses with prominent mosaics of Christ upon their upper reaches. Thus, when the priest faced East, he also faced this monumental image of Christ, and even if the church did not face East, the orientation upon this image was truly Christocentric. Pope Benedict thus reasoned that when it was not practical to face East, a similar image of Christ could be faced when a crucifix was placed before the priest at the center of the altar. This "Benedictine order" is now what he consistently follows when

he celebrates Mass. These days we have easy access to papal Masses, since they are frequently broadcast on EWTN, and there the Benedictine order can be observed; His Holiness can be seen intently looking at the cross as he celebrates Mass.

This is a striking alternative to the widespread practice of the priest engaging the attention of the congregation and cultivating his own personal presidential style, which often has the undesirable effect of focusing attention on the priest or on the interaction of priest and people, rather than focusing the attention of both priest and people upon Christ whose work is the principal action of the Mass.

It has often been said in support of the posture of facing the people that it was in order that the people "could see what is going on." But what is going on is not visible to natural vision, only to the eyes of faith. Could it be that the unrealized promise of physically seeing what is going on is a factor in the current decline in Eucharistic faith? At the least, facing the people increases the possibility that the dialogue between priest and people will leave God as a remote observer, rather than the transcendent object of the entire proceeding.

When Pope Benedict allowed greater use of the extraordinary form of the Mass (the so-called Tridentine Mass), the news media immediately reacted by saying that the priest turns his back on the people, but this is an ignorant caricature, for in the posture *ad orientem*, priest and people together face a transcendent direction, a powerful symbol of addressing God as a primary object and an important use of space in the service of the transcendent.

Sacred things need to be differentiated, so that one kind can be distinguished from another, and so that the more sacred can be perceived as distinct from the less sacred. Thus by spatial differentiation the eastward direction is privileged over other directions, and the image of Christ over other images.

Time is also used in the liturgy to differentiate the sacred, in kind and degree, and to express the transcendent, particularly through music, the pre-eminent art of time. Important times of the day, Lauds and Vespers, are emphasized by receiving services with more music and slighty more elaborate music. Each day is

distinguished from the others by different pieces of music (propers), and the major days easily become associated with their propers. Especially Holy Week and Easter are distinguished from the rest of the year by their unique music.

Likewise music contributes to the sense of the sacred by structuring the time of the rite it accompanies. By being based upon a sacred text, set to a sacred melody, performed for the duration of a sacred rite, it projects the sense of the sacredness of the rite itself, and extends this in time; the time of the rite by itself would be amorphous, but the addition of music expresses the purpose of the rite by giving it a temporal shape and direction.

How can music express the sacred or the secular? It has to do with the significance and symbolism of styles. Styles of music have certain intrinsic suitability to sacred or secular purposes; in addition, by association they have the ability immediately to call to mind the original context to which they belong. Cocktail music, for instance, takes only a few measures to recall the clink of ice cubes in the glass or to raise the question "where's my martini?"; or military music, to evoke the image of troops marching in rhythmic lockstep. Songs in the style of Broadway musicals are not quite so self-evidently out of place in a sacred context, until one examines where they come from. They are pure entertainment, limited but not bad in itself, with stereotyped, sentimental situations and easy solutions. But certainly the Mass is far more than entertainment, and its situation far more profound and serious.

Even among sacred styles, one can see degrees of sacredness according as the style evokes sacred qualities. Compare vernacular metric hymns with a Gregorian introit: the hymn has a regular and emphatic rhythm, slightly akin to the march, whereas the introit has an irregular alternation of groups of two and three and a subtle and not emphatic beat. The one is strongly temporal, but the other, in its evasion of a strong and regular meter and in its subtle rhythm is more capable of at least evoking eternity. Even the hymn, though its texts are sound, its melody and harmony excellent, and its style identifiable as a sacred style, through its rhythm is tied to the strong sense of the passage of time. By comparison with the Gregorian introit, it is in the here and now, and brings a focus upon the present time and the present congregation

singing it. The Gregorian introit, on the other hand, by its rhythm intimates eternity; its object is clearly outside of the present context and directs our attention to a transcendent object. This is exactly what the eastward position does. The coordination of a music with a stance on the part of the celebrant, both of which project transcendence promises to bring substantial clarity of purpose to the liturgy.

The Masses of the papal visit to the United States last year were quite worth watching. One saw the Benedictine order on the altar and the pope intent upon the cross when he approached the altar. Yet the entrance processions were with fanfares of trumpets and hymns sung by throngs of people. True, the hymns gave a positive character to the processions and focused upon those making the procession, set a certain festive tone. I am not complaining; it could have been much worse; still, it could have also been much better. If one change could have been made that would have transformed those liturgies, it would have been to sing the Gregorian introit instead of the hymns. A Gregorian introit would have created a sense of expectation of the transcendent act soon to be undertaken and would have established a sacred tone to the whole proceeding from the outset. Thus music can establish a more or less sacred character to a rite, especially Gregorian chant, which is intrinsic to the rites themselves.

A good friend and colleague of mine, Rebecca Stewart of the Netherlands, an ethnomusicologist who has studied sacred music across the cultures of the world, says that there is a common characteristic of all sacred music: that it is always seeking. I take that to mean, among other things, that the object of the music making is not the music itself, but something outside itself. Should the object of the music making be the congregation? or should it not be the transcendent object of the liturgy, Christ himself in all his glory? This music should lift our attention up to the Lord.

Music can also differentiate the parts of the liturgy, with some parts projecting their texts in a normal speech rhythm, as in the psalmody of the divine office, being sung to psalm tones. Other parts of the liturgy, based upon the same texts but projecting those texts in a more solemn and rhythmic way, characterize the motion of processions at the introit or communion,

adding a spiritual and transcendent dimension. But still other parts, again based upon the same texts, nearly depart from the text, giving elaborate melismas to some of the syllables, such as in the gradual and alleluia. Here the delivery of the text is so slowed down that its experience is that of nearly arresting the sense of the passage of time; in this, these chants intimate the experience of eternity, a momentary transcendence of the temporal, a glimpse of that place where Christ dwells forever and the ultimate goal of our worship.

What orientation and music have in common, then, is addressing the transcendent: *ad orientem* by being a part of a notion of space that is itself transcendent, that is, it is directed to East, not as a geographical direction, but a transcendent one; and Gregorian chant by avoiding the emphasis upon the regular passage of time that is oriented to transcending earthly time and indicating or intimating heavenly time, eternity.

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LISTENING AND SINGING

Participation in the music of the liturgy involves two complementary processes: listening and singing. In recent years, the singing of the congregation has been taken for granted (sometimes even as mandatory, to the exclusion of music sung by the choir), but listening is often overlooked as an essential part of the role of music in the liturgy and even as an essential complement to singing itself. Pope John Paul II spoke of listening in an *ad limina* address to the Bishops of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska:

> Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favors

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> nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.[1]

Thus, silence, stillness, and listening are essential to active participation in liturgy. How can this be possible? In listening, we hear the Word of God, the teaching of the church—the truth. But also in listening and watching, we hear music and see purposeful actions—the beautiful. In both, we seek to hear the voice of God, to sense his presence. We cannot do this without recollection. As Fr. Kirby[2] tells us, music arises from silence and returns to silence. The silence of the external world can represent the silence of the soul, the attentive repose of recollection, when all our faculties have put away distraction and are prepared to respond sympathetically to what they see and hear.

Our present society is filled with sounds; practically everywhere something that passes for music pervades. If, however, we examine what is valuable about music, we may find that not much of that stuff around us fully meets the criteria. Music is to be listened to intently, not just as a background for doing other things, or even as a distraction from being confidently in God's presence. We should listen to music which presents to our mind a principle of order in motion which resonates with the orders internal to our own souls, such that we are brought into harmony with something larger than ourselves. This kind of listening involves a very active internal participation in the music we hear. When what we hear does not present something compelling to inner participation, then it is not the highest kind of music; it may even be mere noise. For it to be compelling it has to touch upon something we already have and yet give something we do not already have; it must lift us up beyond where we are.

What is to be heard in music? Essentially, harmony—not just the simultaneous sounding of chords, but the harmonious motion

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[1] October 9, 1998; http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1998/october/

[2] Cf. Fr. Mark Daniel Kirby, "Toward a Definition of Liturgical Chant," *Sacred Music*, 136, no. 2 (2009), 5–39.

of melodies, rhythms, and counterpoints as well. And when we hear these, they resonate within us, because we feel an affinity with the way they represent order and purpose. And that feeling of affinity helps us model our own sense of order and purpose. This amounts to our internalizing the music.

So the act of listening and hearing is something to which we contribute a very active process—responding in an active, harmonious way to the beauty which is intrinsic to the music. That beauty is an aspect of all reality, even and especially of God; that beauty embodies the integrity and persuasiveness of something whose inner essence is freely shown forth in it.

Listening is aided by memory—we have heard a piece before; as we hear it again, our memory of the piece is activated, we are reminded anew of its beauty, but we experience this as an activation of something that belongs to us. Along with this, the perception of its beauty activates something fundamental to our soul, and this experience is identified with the hearing of the piece.

In perceiving beauty we reach out to it, we attain it, we make it our own, and it ennobles us in the process, this is particularly true of the beauty of the liturgy. This is where the perception of both beauty and truth are integrated. The texts of the liturgy and its actions embody the highest truths available to us, and when they are sung to chants which are not just additions to these texts, but real expressions of their inner meaning and purpose, then the persuasiveness of the integration of beauty and truth is at its peak.

In the liturgy, the pieces we hear of Gregorian chant unite us intimately with the liturgical action, since they themselves are united to their texts and the actions of which they are a part—they are more than accompaniment, they are an integral part of the action.

Singing is not possible without listening, for singing is a response to things heard. If the listening has involved that kind of participation in which beauty is interiorized, then singing can arise from an experience of beauty. Singing thus relies upon that store of recollection, that internalized harmony, joyfully returning it to its source. In the liturgy, the singing of the whole congregation most appropriately addresses God, the highest beauty, and

thus it is most appropriate that it should proceed from that internalized harmony. It is returning back the fruits of the perception of beauty attained in listening.

Singing orders the thoughts and gives them a beautiful external form; this form is compelling enough, especially if it is truly beautiful, that it creates an external unity of the voices singing; moreover, the beauty of the external form is sufficiently persuasive actually to create an internal unity of minds, a concord of hearts. Reformers have often labored to create "community," but nothing creates community as effectively as a group unselfconsciously dedicating itself to a common purpose, especially when that common purpose is one of the highest things a human person can do—to praise God. And when that common purpose is expressed in a beautiful form the dedication to the purpose is given that delight that is essential to beauty—"that which when seen pleases." Thus, as the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says,

> Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.[3]

Just as the worshipper is ennobled by the process of the perception of beauty and the recollection it elicits, so the congregation can be ennobled by being drawn into the making of something beautiful in singing the chants of the Mass.

This leads to the conclusion that the traditional division between ordinary sung by the congregation and proper sung by the choir may provide the best opportunity for the deepest kind of participation, a participation in which action and recollection each most fruitfully plays its part.

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[3] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶112.

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FOCUS

Symmetry is essential to the various elements of the liturgy, whether architecture, the arts of motion, or even music. Participation in the liturgy requires attention, even recollection, focus. Symmetry aids in focus; this is because it creates a focal point at its center, which draws the attention; this focus, in turn, aids in our disposition toward the mysteries being celebrated and our participation in them.

The most evident aspect of symmetry and focus is to be seen in the architecture. The traditional cruciform arrangement of a church is a nave and sanctuary as longitudinal elements and transepts as lateral ones. The nave and sanctuary create a focal point, which is at the "East" end of the longitudinal space and which ultimately focuses upon the altar. Or does it? Especially in those churches with splendid stained glass surrounding the sanctuary at considerable height, the attention, which is drawn eastward toward the altar, is also lifted up and directed to a transcendent dimension, upwards and beyond the church to the heavens. The orientation of this longitudinal space upon the heavens eastward creates an additional focus: it faces the place of the rising

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sun—a symbol of Christ—where he reigns, and whence he will return.

The transepts of the cruciform arrangement create a lateral symmetry that focuses upon the crossing, the point where the lateral and longitudinal spaces intersect. In recent times, the altar in some great cathedrals has been moved to this point; this creates a central focus upon the altar itself, though it diminishes somewhat the eastward focus. Great cathedrals, especially in England and Spain, have impressive, light-flooded towers or domes at the crossing, which increase the focus upon this point, and add a transcendent element to it as well.

The cruciform has a deeper significance—it symbolizes the body of Christ on the cross, and this in turn emphasizes his presence at the center of the Mass which is celebrated there—the Mass is his action, and his centrality to that action is made more vivid by the cruciform.

The altar also shows significant symmetries. If there is a tabernacle on the high altar, all things around it contribute to a focus upon it; candles, flowers, statues, etc., are usually placed in symmetrical arrangement, so that the tabernacle is the object of considerable focus. When the tabernacle is placed to the side, the symmetry is broken, and the centrality of the sacrament is obscured. One sometimes even sees an arrangement of the altar that is non-symmetrical—e.g., the candles are all on one side of the altar and the flowers on the other, creating a casual effect, as if it were an arrangement for an informal dinner, rather than the Lamb's High Banquet. Worse, the disposition of the elements in the sanctuary is sometimes such that the altar is off center (to the right as the congregation faces the altar), and the ambo has been set in a kind of balance against the altar, based upon a theory that the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist are equal, and so the altar should not be at the center, but offset. This is, admittedly, also a kind of symmetry, but it is a false one, since the Eucharist is an even more fundamental presence than the gospel.

There is in the traditional ordering of a church, a side of priority, the side to the right of the celebrant as he faces the congregation, called the gospel side, because the ambo or the pulpit, at which the gospel is read, is on this side. This is balanced by an

ambo on the opposite side, where the epistle is read, but this ambo is usually smaller, emphasizing the subordinate relation of the epistle to the gospel. This symmetry might be called a dynamic symmetry, one in which the symmetrical elements are not quite equal, but complement each other for a particular purpose.

The rubrics for the ordinary form speak of only one ambo, from which all the lessons are read, but its earliest rubrics say "ambo (or ambones)," leaving open the possibility of using two. Commentators say that the reason for only one ambo is that this expresses the unity of the scriptures, but I am unable to find such a justification in any official document. I suspect that the reason all the lessons are delivered from the same ambo is to leave the ambo on the opposite side free for a cantor to preside from that side—one ambo reserved for the scripture, the other open to other uses. But when there is no cantor, it would seem that the epistle side could be used for the first two lessons, and then the gospel side for the gospel and homily. The gospel is privileged by being the ultimate lesson in the liturgy of the word in an ascending order and by a procession to the ambo, accompanied by candles and incense. As one of the celebrants of our Mass in Palo Alto said, it makes little sense for a procession to go to a place where you have just been. This is a purposeful dynamic symmetry: there is a balance between the first lessons and the gospel expressed by their being read in symmetrical positions, at opposite sides of the sanctuary, but there is also a priority expressed for the gospel through the elements of the procession, through a greater prominence of the ambo from which it is read, as well as through the convention that the gospel side is the side of priority.

The significant elements of the liturgy are not only spatial, but also temporal, and the interaction between these elements is mediated by motion, principally in processions. There are two ways in which motion can create focus, by moving to a goal and by encircling an important object (called by liturgical theorists "circumambulation"). The gospel procession moves to the ambo or pulpit as a goal, and this is experienced as a kind of progress, especially when the goal has a spatial priority, as does the ambo on the gospel side. The incensing of the altar is an example of

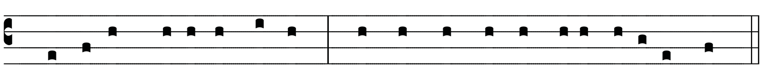
motion that encircles a sacred object. There is symmetry in the patterns by which the thurible is swung, and the rhythm of this motion is articulated by the sound of the chains of the thurible clanking against it. In the Eastern Church, this rhythmic motion is made more evident by the use of small bells attached to the thurible, which jingle with each swing. These days, celebrants who use incense are sometimes self-conscious about it and avoid the clanking of the chains, but this is a mistake; this clanking is a significant element of the rhythm of the purposeful motion. Even though music is being sung during the incensation, as is usually the case, the human ear knows perfectly well how to distinguish rhythmic sounds from two different sources at once, and so this sound of the thurible does no damage whatever to the music.

Many processions include elements of both circumambulation and moving to a goal. A good example is the entrance procession at Mass. While the traditional entrance procession was often merely a discreet movement from the sacristy to the altar, sometimes the procession would move through the church. These days, a more elaborate procession is often made; the members of the procession make their way to the back of the church and then form a procession down the center aisle to the altar. But unless the sacristy is in the back of the church, this procession has a problem: its point of departure at the back is somewhat artificial and its preparation by having the clergy walk to the back in a non-processional way is awkward, to say the least. Sometimes the procession goes outside and around to the front of the church, in the front door and down the center aisle, unless, of course, it is raining. More significantly the procession can begin at the sacristy at the front, moving down the side aisle, across the back of the church and then up the center aisle to the altar. This has the advantage that it represents the actual movement from sacristy to altar, but it has a greater significance, since it is essentially a circumambulation. By moving down the side aisle and up the center aisle, it encircles half of the congregation, symbolically subsuming the whole congregation in its purposeful motion to its goal, the altar. It thus symbolically incorporates the congregation into the motion and presents them to the altar, the most sacred place in the church, whose sacrality is then observed by the incensation.

The circumambulation creates a focus upon the congregation, which is then turned to its ultimate goal, the altar.

The motions of acolytes, when symmetrical, can project a clear focal point. Although there is no developed art of dance in the liturgy, these motions have some similarities to dance. The motions of a solo dancer can seem intricate and beautiful but perhaps easily achieved in the freedom of the soloist. But when two dancers replicate exactly the same motions, then an extraordinary sense of focus and control is projected that is awesome to observe. The motions of acolytes, even though not the result of such skill, achieve a similar sense of focus and purpose. When they move to the center and back out in perfect mirror motion, the focal point of the center is clear, and their motion conveys the purposefulness of that center, even beyond the function of the particular motions.

Music, also, has symmetries which create focus. The paradigm of liturgical music is Gregorian chant, and it has its own kinds of symmetry. Its texts are principally the psalms, and their symmetries are well known: The typical psalm verse consists of two complete, complementary statements, the so-called *parallelismus membrorum*:

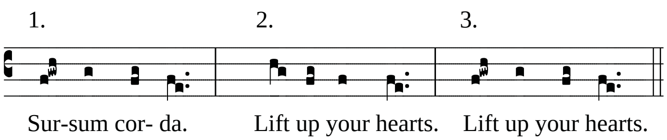


For behold God is my helper; and the Lord is the protector of my soul.

Moreover, the melody gives this symmetry a particular focal point. The first half rises to a peak, and, in the convention of the performance of the psalm tone, makes a brief pause before it descends to its final cadence. That brief pause is measured and lasts for just a second or two, but as the center of the symmetry, at the high point of the melody, it forms a momentary point of contemplation, transcending the symmetry for an instant. More elaborate Gregorian melodies have similar shapes, so that Peter

Wagner theorized that the archetypal shape of Gregorian melody was the arch, rising from a low point to a peak, symbolizing the ascent of prayer, and then descending, symbolizing an answer to the prayer. Phrase after phrase of Gregorian chant has such motion, and the effect of the singing of such phrases in succession is the lifting of the attention heavenward.

But not all chanted melodies have such a shape; recently proposed psalm tones, and the current melodies for the English liturgy themselves, sometimes seem upsidedown, consisting of a prevalence of descending motion. An example is "Sursum corda" and its translation:



In the Latin, "Sursum" (literally, up) receives an ascending three-note group with a quilisma in the middle reinforcing the upward motion (Ex. 1). The current English takes away the first two notes and sets the text to the rest, which are in a prevalently downward direction (Ex. 2).[1] The English could have easily been set literally to the same melody as the Latin (Ex. 3), thus preserving the ascending direction so intimately linked with the meaning of the text. Fortunately, this will be remedied in the new translation. A similar demonstration could be made with the Latin and English melodies for the Lord's Prayer. Unfortunately, the present "upside-down" melody for the Lord's Prayer may be retained in American usage.

There are many fascinating symmetries in polyphonic music; I will mention only one, perhaps the prevalent one: imitation. In

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[1] One is reminded of Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Is this not calling up down and down up?

imitation, each voice takes the same melody in turn, and thus the accumulation of different voices presenting the same melody makes up a harmonious whole. The symmetry of these voices adding up to a harmonious whole evokes a sense of purposeful order that in turn represents the sense of cosmic order with which the Creator endowed the universe. This is a different kind of focus, but one which engages the affections: the perception of the harmony of such order touches the heart and attracts the will to the paradigm of harmonious order. Pope Benedict has referred to this effect of music:

> The Church . . . must arouse the voice of the cosmos and, by glorifying the Creator, elicit the glory of the cosmos itself, making it also glorious, beautiful, habitable and beloved.[2]

I have described several ways in which the elements of liturgy create a focus; music, however, is the key to this focus. The elements of architecture are the object of processions, motion to a focal point; processions create their own focal points. But all of these motions are enhanced and given a strong sense of order by music. Music has the capacity to construct time, thus to provide a focused context for motion. Processions would be amorphous without music; with it, they are orderly and purposeful. Moreover, the focus that sacred music, particularly Gregorian chant, gives to motion is that the rhythm of both chant and polyphony is a free rhythm, one that by its avoidance of strong beats evokes the transcendence of the regular passage of time, evokes an intimation of eternity. In this it serves a function similar to the great Gothic sanctuaries in which the elevated circle of windows draws the attention upward and outward, evoking its transcendent purpose.

[2] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, tr. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 124.

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PRIDE OF PLACE

We frequently hear—and quote as well—the catch-words that represent the special status of Gregorian chant: "Gregorian chant has *pride of place* in the Roman Rite."[1] Although "pride of place" has been the common translation, it may not be the best, for the original Latin is *principem locum*, "principal place," or "first place." The translation "pride of place" thus seems honorific but ineffective, like giving an old uncle a place at the table but not listening to what he says. I am afraid that this is all too often the case with Gregorian chant—at best, one or two pieces of chant in a heterogeneous mix of hymns, sacro-pop songs, watery antiphons, spoken texts, etc.

One rejoices at seeing a few Gregorian chants incorporated into a parish Mass—a step in the right direction, but not the ideal. The council stated the ideal, the sung Mass with sacred ministers, choir, and people each singing their parts—in the context of tradition, a high Mass, in which all the audible parts are sung. This completely sung Mass is the way Gregorian chant has principal

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[1]Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116.

place, for each sung part of the liturgy has its own style of chant, which characterizes that part and beautifully distinguishes it from the others. This approach to singing the Mass is encouraged by the document *Musicam Sacram* (1967) in its three degrees of the employment of music, and it is recalled in the strong recommendation in *Sing to the Lord* (2007) for the celebrant to sing his parts.

Thus in the authentic tradition of Gregorian chants, an introit is different from a communion, a gradual from an offertory, even if they both might use the same text, because through differences in musical style each characterizes and differentiates the liturgical action it accompanies. Moreover, each of the items is not just a text that happens to be set to a melody, but rather, it is an integral piece comprised of both melody and text together.

It is possible, and permissible to replace a Gregorian introit with an introit from the *Graduale simplex*, or a setting of the introit text to a psalm tone, or a vernacular adaptation of the introit melody, or a metric hymn, but none of these replacements is any longer the Gregorian introit—it does not give Gregorian chant principal place; it is not the ideal for which the council exhorts us to strive for.

We rarely achieve this ideal in any individual celebration of Mass. What is important is that we know what the ideal is, and in each celebration of Mass, we work toward it. If we have a Mass with four hymns, we can begin to work toward the ideal by persuading the celebrant to sing his parts—the collects, the preface, and the introduction to the Lord's Prayer, leading to the congregation's singing of the prayer.

We can also work toward the ideal by providing the congregation the opportunity of singing the ordinary, beginning with the Sanctus and Agnus Dei or with the Kyrie. These need not only be the simplest melodies, but congregations can easily learn some of the more melodious chants, Kyrie *Orbis factor*, for example, or the Sanctus and Agnus Dei from the same Mass XI.

We can work toward the ideal by beginning to incorporate some Gregorian propers into the celebration. The communion

chants are a good place to begin. The antiphon can be sung in alternation with psalm verses, allowing the desirable repetition (a few times) to familiarize both congregation and choir with the chant. The amount of time it takes for communion allows for its incorporation without prolonging the length of the Mass or replacing other musical pieces. This is why the Church Music Association has published *Communio*, providing the psalm verses and antiphons for all the days of obligation through the year. Once the congregation has begun to sing parts of the ordinary well, other proper chants can be introduced without depriving the congregation of participation. Replacing the metric introit hymn with a Gregorian introit can make a major difference of direction for the whole Mass by projecting a sense of elevation and solemnity. All of this must be done with circumspection, testing its reception on the part of the congregation. Each circumstance is different, and progress may be slower or faster from place to place.

I am not saying that singing the introit text to a psalm tone or singing an entrance hymn is bad; I am saying that there are relative goods. Other things being equal, a Gregorian introit is better than an entrance hymn. But they are relative goods: in some circumstances, the psalm tone or the hymn may even be the best choice. But I am also saying that these are good choices, especially when they are seen as stages along the way to achieving the ideal.

The cultivation of this ideal is why the Colloquium in Chicago focused upon completely sung Masses, mostly in Latin, and mostly with Gregorian chant propers, Gregorian or polyphonic ordinary movements, and motets in classical polyphony—the experience of the paradigm as the ideal behind what we aim for in the parishes, no matter what the limitations are.

Dominica Pentecostes
AD MISSAM IN DIE

Communion *Acts 2: 2, 4, [11]*



Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, whence they were sitting; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak the wonderful words of God.

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SINGING AND SAYING

One of the more positive aspects of the American Bishops' recent document *Sing to the Lord* is its endorsement of the priest's singing of his parts of the liturgy:

> No other single factor affects the liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the priest celebrant.
>
> The importance of the priest's participation in the liturgy, especially by singing, cannot be overemphasized.
>
> The documents of the post-conciliar renewal repeatedly commend the ideal of a sung liturgy with sung dialogues between priest and people.[1]

When the priest sings his parts, the whole sung liturgy is integrated by this singing. Principal parts are introduced by dialogues between priest and people, which then form the point of departure for the continuing musical progress of the liturgy. When the priest sings his parts and the congregation sings their responses, their part is integral to the Mass, and when they go on to sing whole

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[1] *Sing to the Lord*, ¶18, 19, note 33.

parts of the ordinary and to hear the choir sing parts of the proper, these parts, too, become as integral parts of the sacred action. Then, too, the subtle differences in style between the parts of the Gregorian Mass are effectively heard as a natural part of the sacred proceedings. Without the integration created by the priest's singing, the sung parts of choir and congregation seem more incidental.

But why should we have this fully sung liturgy? What is the most appropriate medium by which to address God in a formal liturgy? After the council, with the introduction of the vernacular and the stance of the priest at the altar facing the people, priests were often tempted to strike up a colloquial, conversational tone in an effort to engage the people, but this informal character tended to militate against the sacred and transcendent aspects of the liturgy, with the effect that too often the proceedings appeared to be merely a dialogue between priest and people, with little direct address to God. Moreover, the secular character of some of the music reinforced that horizontal dimension.

The singing element of the liturgy takes it out of the frame of the everyday; its elevated tone of voice aids in lifting the heart and the attention upward, where we envision God to dwell. The beautifully formulated prayers, lessons, and chants are a worthy means of addressing God, who is Beauty himself. The naturally rhythmic character of singing unites the voices of the congregation, joining them to an act of transcendent beauty, drawing them upward in the singing of it. For the moment they are taken out of the everyday, temporarily set aside for the most important thing they can do, the worship of God, and this is the essence of the sacred. What a joy for a congregation, to be incorporated into a worthy and beautiful act of worship! The singing celebrant is thus the keystone of such a beautiful liturgy.

This manner of celebrating a completely sung Mass was integral to the tradition. The normative form of the Mass was the high Mass, in which everything to be said aloud was sung. It must be acknowledged that before electronic amplification, singing was the way to project the priest's voice through a live church; it was a practical necessity. But it must also be acknowledged that this is only a part of the picture—the elements of beauty, transcendence,

and the sacred are essential aspects of that same singing. In the 1940s Marshall McLuhan said that the microphone would be the death of the Latin Mass, a very astute and prophetic observation.

The Second Vatican Council reiterated the principle of a completely sung Mass:

> A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the sacred ministers take their parts in them, and the faithful actively participate.[2]

And *Musicam sacram* spelled it out:

> The distinction between the solemn, the high, and the low Mass . . . remains in force, according to tradition and current law. But for pastoral reasons degrees of solemnity for the sung Mass are proposed here in order that it will become easier, in accord with each congregation's capability to make the celebration of the Mass more solemn through the use of singing.[3]

It specified three degrees of the progressive employment of music, (1) the fundamental priest's parts—the dialogues, the collects, and the preface—plus the Sanctus and the Lord's Prayer; (2) the ordinary and the intercessions; and (3) the propers and the lessons.

Because these degrees of progressive employment of music are presented in the context of the introductory statement that the high Mass is to be retained, they must be viewed as a means to that end, a way to introduce the elements of a high Mass gradually, and not as a permanent status quo.

However, on the basis of this statement from *Musicam Sacram,*

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[2] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, ¶113.

[3] Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on Music in the Liturgy, *Musicam Sacram*, ¶28.

Sing to the Lord has proposed a theory of progressive solemnity that turns out to be more a theory of selective solemnity—on certain more solemn days, more parts of the Mass might be sung. The result is a "middle Mass," in which the mixture of sung and spoken parts is the medium of the liturgy, and in which the effect of the fully sung Mass is eviscerated.

Let me be clear about my view: The introduction of a high Mass in most parishes could be quite a slow process. The priest may begin by singing the collects and perhaps the preface and the doxology to the Eucharistic Prayer; the people may sing the Sanctus and the Lord's Prayer; and the choir may sing the communion antiphon, while the rest of the Mass continues with what music has been customary. Only when this is well-received and practiced should further elements be added, perhaps after several weeks or even months. This does not preclude incorporating more sung elements on the solemn feasts, for example singing the gospel on Easter Sunday. But it does not support ultimately varying these elements to express the degrees of solemnity inherent in the liturgical year. The goal of these degrees of incorporation of music is the regular, completely sung Mass, not the differentiation of the seasons.

The traditional musical means of differentiating the seasons are inherent in the completely sung Mass—the omission of the use of the organ during the penitential season, the singing of the tract in place of the alleluia during Lent and the singing of two alleluias during the Easter season, the employment of more elaborate settings of the Ordinary of the Mass on the more solemn days and less elaborate ones on less solemn days, all of this in the context of a completely sung Mass.

Why was this form of the sung mass not carried out throughout the church? It must be acknowledged that in a few places the tradition continued from before the council, but these were clearly exceptional. There was an overwhelming spirit of change following the council, that with a fashion for an informal, conversational attitude of the priest at the altar, encouraged by a quick change to the vernacular and by turning the altar around, that simply left behind what was perceived as only the old way. This was aided and abetted by a developing negativity toward tradition, something that has not completely subsided.

It was also aided by an old mentality from before the council, that the text was the only thing that constituted the liturgy. This mentality had grown since the Council of Trent, perhaps rooted in the invention and growth of printing that so standardized the visual aspect of the texts. When new feasts were introduced, the texts were prescribed and the music left up to the initiative of individual musicians, for example, the sequence *Stabat mater* for the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, made universal in 1727; the text is found universally in liturgical books after that, but each locality prescribed its own melody for that text. This was, of course, not a disaster, but I mention it as a symptom of the loss of the sense that the music itself, and not just the text, is integral to the liturgy.

Recent popes have argued against this disregard for tradition in general: Pope John Paul II spoke strongly upon the need to read the texts of the council in the light of tradition, and Pope Benedict XVI has epitomized this attitude by coining the term "hermeneutic of continuity." Thus it is that we stand at the point of beginning to recover the sense of the sung liturgy, to cultivate genuinely beautiful singing of Gregorian chant by our congregations, and to recover a sense that since the liturgy is a unique event in our lives, it should be conducted in a unique manner, that is in a truly sacred manner.

Singing the Lessons

The singing of the lessons is a case in point. When the gradual and allelluia are sung in Gregorian chant in Latin, or when they are sung in an English adaptation to one or another chant-like medium and the lessons are sung, the continuity of the liturgy of the word is apparent, with the singing of the gospel coming as the culmination of a series of increasingly important elements. When the lessons are read, however, the point of the gradual and alleluia are not as apparent, and the culmination in the gospel fizzles, I am sorry to say.

Moreover, when the lessons are sung, they are presented as sacred texts; the singing protects them from the idiosyncrasies of the individual reader, and actually makes them easier to perceive.

But it also enhances their importance as sacred texts. The use of the proper tones distinguishes each type of lesson, prophecy, epistle, and gospel. More and more, the lessons are being sung in liturgies, and so the article in this issue on the singing of the lessons is opportune instruction on the proper way to sing these lessons.[4] It is quite feasible to use the Latin tones, since they are quite simple; the epistle presents certain difficulties, but those can be effectively solved.

New Chant Studies

The article in the present issue presents a non-standard version of the communion *Tu puer*, for the feast of St. John the Baptist.[5] We publish it as continuing results of research on chant; we neither endorse nor reject this version, but present it is an example of what is being done by scholars today. Compare it with the version of the Vatican edition, sing it, study it, make a judgment about it. We would be interested in your views of it.

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[4] Adam Thome, "Sung Readings in the Ordinary Form of the Mass," *Sacred Music*, 136, no. 1 (2009), 32–40.

[5] Edward R. Sywulka, "Prepare the Way: an Analysis of *Tu Puer*," *Sacred Music*, 136, no. 1 (2009), 41–48 at 42.

36

PRACTICAL SACRALITY

The sacredness of the liturgy is axiomatic for a journal called *Sacred Music*; yet it is also axiomatic for a church whose most recent council issued its first document as a Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the sixth chapter of which was entitled "Sacred Music." The sacredness of the liturgy was also axiomatic for the tradition before the council, especially beginning with Pope St. Pius X, whose Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* gave "sanctity" as one of the three characteristics of sacred music. This all suggests that music must be the vehicle of maintaining the sacredness of the liturgy, at least when it is music that is unambiguously sacred.

Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II before him emphasize the necessity of reading the council documents in the light of tradition, a process they name "the hermeneutic of continuity." Yet in the sixties the change to the vernacular and particularly to a mediocre translation unwittingly played into the hands of those cultivating the "hermeneutic of discontinuity," and it was followed by a period when music often compromised rather than fostered the sanctity of the liturgy.

The article appeared in *Sacred Music* 137, no. 4 (2010).

It is now high time to reconnect with the tradition and to restore a sense of sacrality to the celebration of the liturgy throughout the church. One of Pope Benedict's purposes in encouraging the more frequent celebration of the extraordinary form was to hold up a mirror of sacrality to the ordinary form. Many of us look to the old rite itself as a kind of ideal, and this is understandable, since the preponderance of the treasury of sacred music was formed in that context. Moreover, for some of us, it was the liturgy we grew up with. But even if one were to hold that the extraordinary form is the more perfect form and seek to cultivate it exclusively—something completely admissible for individuals—as musicians and as an organization devoted to the cultivation of sacred music, we have a larger responsibility. Since the ordinary form is the norm in the parishes and cathedrals, the recovery of the sacrality of the liturgy in this form is essential. A slow, gradual improvement on a broad scale is necessary. The council gave Gregorian chant first place in the liturgy and also gave classical polyphony and organ music a special role, and the increased use of these can very well be an important step.

There are significant obstacles: (1) many musicians in the parishes have no formation in Gregorian chant; in fact, some of them have been hired from Protestant traditions, perhaps with the implicit assumption that this will insure and improve the Protestant model, the four-hymn sandwich; (2) some pastors do not see the centrality of music to the liturgy, sometimes being openly hostile to chant and polyphony; (3) congregations have become accustomed to the hymns or "songs" that have completely replaced the Propers of the Mass, and the question is reported to have been asked by a member of one congregation, "Why can't we have the good old Catholic music, like 'On Eagles' Wings'"?

On the other hand, many more pastors are becoming supportive of just that repertory—chant and polyphony. According to *Musicam Sacram* (¶28–30), the repertory of chant includes three general categories, (1) the recitatives and simple formulae by which the priest sings his parts and engages in dialogues with the congregation, (2) the Ordinary of the Mass, generally sung by the congregation, and (3) the Proper of the Mass. All three of

these categories can make a significant contribution to the sacrality of the Mass. When the priest sings his parts, his delivery is lifted up from the conversational tone of the everyday, which we all too often hear in the liturgy; when he sings his parts it is unambiguously clear that he is doing something sacred. Moreover, the lively alternation of priest and people singing is a vivid representation of the respective roles, enhanced by the melodic and rhythmic vitality of singing. When the congregation sings the ordinary in Gregorian chant, they are united by ancient melodies that are yet ever fresh and beautiful; these melodies bear no trace of the everyday music that crowds our consciousness from radio, television, and commercial background music; their rhythm is like nothing we hear outside the liturgy. Recently, there has been a strong movement towards the singing of the Propers of the Mass—the prescribed introit, gradual, alleluia, offertory, and communion. When these are chanted, they contribute to an elevation of the rites they accompany, emphasizing the sacredness of the action and eliciting the recollection and reflection the congregation urgently requires. The Propers of the Mass in their full Gregorian melodies constitute by far the largest body of chant for the Mass and include the most excellent pieces in the repertory. The wholesale replacement of the propers by arbitrarily chosen hymns or "songs" cannot hold a candle to these authentic propers.

Let me repeat what I have often said: hymns are not bad: in fact, the best of them are beautiful. Yet there is a better way: The sacrality of the liturgy is substantially enhanced when what is sung is what the church and its tradition prescribes to be sung. In place of hymns, the Propers of the Mass should be introduced. These are what the church prescribes and they are a substantial portion of the repertory of Gregorian chant, about which the council said, "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given first place in liturgical services."[1]

There are relative goods here. Not all good things are equally good, but some are greater goods. Clearly hymns are a greater

[1] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116.

good than "songs" in the style of current pop music from the secular (very secular) world. But from the point of view of sacrality, the proper introit, gradual, alleluia, offertory, and communion, with their texts from the scripture, mainly the psalms, and with their flowing speech-like rhythm, convey the sense of singing the Mass, rather than singing at Mass, of fulfilling a sacred requirement by performing what the liturgy requires. There continues a series of relative goods—to chant the texts of the Mass propers on a psalm tone (a practice that was prevalent before the council, but which at the time we considered almost an abuse) is better than not to sing them at all. If the situation requires them to be in English, then a greater good will probably be to use one of the several available simple settings to chant melodies now available in English. Even better would be to sing a good adaptation of the full Gregorian melody to English. There is no clear solution to which version should be used, but perhaps the solution should be that of high-church Anglicans for quite a long time—choirmasters made their own adaptations. There are inherent limitations in such English Gregorian versions. At first they seem an ideal solution, but upon repetition imperfections begin to appear. This is normal, and for such chants, continuing revision and thus gradual improvement are essential. But we must recall that this process of gradual improvement has already taken place over centuries for Gregorian chant in Latin, and Gregorian propers in Latin are more beautiful, a greater good.

We have often proposed a general program for the incorporation of chant and polyphony into the regular parish liturgy. In most places, this should be done gradually: The priest can begin by singing the dialogues with the people and the preface, as well as the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. He can gradually add the orations and the other prayers. The lessons could follow, and even the Eucharistic Prayer itself can be sung, all in good time. The people can sing the simple Sanctus and Agnus, then a Kyrie; if this is successful, then these can be upgraded by choosing more extended melodies. For a congregation that sings well, the Gloria and Credo can eventually be added. The propers can be added by the choir; if necessary, simple psalm-tone propers can suffice at the beginning, though a better solution is to use

the tones for introit and communion psalmody, which are somewhat more melodic. If the congregation is attached to hymns, and if their singing of the ordinary is just at its beginning, then it would be wise to keep some hymns; often a hymn is sung before Mass and then the entrance procession takes place during the singing of the introit by the choir in a relatively simple setting. At the communion there is time for a variety of music: perhaps the Gregorian communion antiphon could be sung with psalm verses alternating with the repetition of the antiphon. A motet could be sung at the offertory as well as at the communion. The singing of the congregation should be cultivated, so that until they can sing several parts of the ordinary well, some hymns should be retained for them. But the ideal should also be kept in mind—the congregation singing all of the ordinary, the choir singing all of the proper—in which case the need for hymns may disappear. This general process may be adapted in a variety of ways, depending upon the abilities of all concerned, the priest, the congregation, and the choir.

It is a sign that the tide is turning in the direction of more sacred music that the most recent issue of *Pastoral Music* (January, 2011), the journal of the National Pastoral Musicians, traditionally no particular friend of chant, has devoted an entire issue to the theme "Chant and Her Children in Today's Liturgy," with articles on chant, polyphony, and organ music. An introductory essay by J. Michael McMahon, the president of the organization and a member of the committee that drafted *Sing to the Lord*, cites that document about the use of Gregorian chant and encourages the membership to make "chant an integral part of the repertoire of your worshiping community." We heartily welcome this development and encourage their membership to consider the gradual incorporation of these sacred musics into their liturgies. Perhaps the gradualism described above will suggest effective ways of doing this.

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SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM

At last the motu proprio is out. The release of *Summorum Pontificum* and the accompanying letter of Pope Benedict XVI will provoke much comment from all ranges of the spectrum; these discussions will be followed with great interest. The document could have an impact upon the celebration of the sacred liturgy for many years to come. Among its points that will please some, for example, is the allowing of clerics to use the old breviary; among the points that may cause difficulty is the provision that "priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books." These and many other issues will be the subject of ongoing discussion; a few may require further clarification. Hopefully, the discussion will proceed with charity and mutual respect.

Much of the commentary that has begun to appear, in the journalism and on the internet, has dealt with purely liturgical matters and not with music; in fact, neither the document itself nor the accompanying letter even mention music; the ramifications for music, however, are many and important. Music, perhaps more

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The article appeared in *Sacred Music* 134, no. 3 (2007).

than any other element of the liturgy, contributes to that sense of sacrality that Pope Benedict mentions in his letter. So my point here is the relation of the motu proprio to the principal aims of *Sacred Music* and our association—that through music the liturgy be made more sacred and more beautiful.

The Pope's message, at its most basic, stems from his view of continuity with tradition—he frequently mentions the "hermeneutic of discontinuity" as an undesirable position taken by some after the council. This is why he emphasizes that there is but one Roman Rite with two uses, the ordinary (the Missal of Paul VI), and the extraordinary (the Missal of John XXIII, the last version of the Mass before the council, the so-called Tridentine Mass). He specifically mentions his hope that the celebration of the old use will illuminate its continuity with the new use and the potential sacrality of the new use. In this view, it is important that the celebration in Latin of both uses be maintained and cultivated, even side-by-side. From the point of view of both liturgy and music, then, the more frequent celebration of the old use will be a mirror up to the new, pointing out potential ways of celebrating the new use in continuity with tradition, and even perhaps suggesting that some of the ways it is celebrated may not be so desirable. Likewise, then, the frequent celebration of the new use in Latin can be a fruitful point of comparison for its celebration in English, suggesting a more formal and sacral performance there as well. I shall address three specific issues relating to music: the sacrality of the liturgy, the singing of the Mass, and the propers of the Mass.

(1) THE SACRED CHARACTER OF THE LITURGY. The ceremonies of the old use are fixed and very specific and ensure that the sacred character of the actions is maintained. No interpolated commentary or improvisation is possible, and a hieratic attitude prevails. In the vernacular, the temptation is to become chatty and conversational, and this mitigates the sacred character. The tendency toward arbitrary variation in the new use does the same.

The old use is customarily said facing the altar, while the new usually faces the people. Negative commentaries on this practice uniformly describe the priest as turning his back upon the people;

this is a caricature, however, for the point is not to neglect the people, but together with the people to face God, and the traditional direction for facing God is the East; even when the church itself does not face East, the direction is described as liturgical East; this is the meaning of the word orientation, facing the orient. Interestingly, this stance of the priest is not prescribed by either use: the Tridentine Mass was always celebrated in St. Peter's in Rome facing the people; moreover, as a Roman basilica, St. Peter's faces West; the celebrant of the Mass faces East by facing the people. On the other hand, the Missal of Paul VI, including the recent edition of 2002, at several points in the Mass, for example just before communion, prescribes that the priest turn toward the people to address them directly, which presumes he is otherwise facing East. A renewed experience of celebrating Mass *ad orientem* may suggest to us that sometimes the stance facing the people may have created more of a dialogue between priest and people, and less of a direct address by both parties toward God; this more direct address to God is a stance that emphasizes the sacrality of the action. Perhaps it may even suggest a more frequent use of the *ad orientem* stance in the new use.

Pope Benedict expresses the hope that "the celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of Paul VI will be able to demonstrate, more powerfully than has been the case hitherto, the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage." It was his celebration of the Masses surrounding the death of Pope John Paul II that so impressed the world with the same sense of the sacred action he describes here; I suspect that it was even a factor in his election.

(2) THE SINGING OF THE MASS. In the old use, there is a hard and fast distinction between the low Mass and the high Mass. Either everything is spoken or everything to be said aloud is sung, including the lessons. This is still the ideal in the new use, articulated by *Musicam Sacram*, though it is not often practiced. Most often one hears a "middle Mass," a mixture of spoken and sung elements, where the most striking difference between parts of the Mass is whether they are spoken or sung. When everything is sung, on the other hand, then the striking differences between the elements are those which represent liturgical differences, such as

between Old Testament and New Testament lessons, and between lessons and responsorial chants between the lessons. Moreover, music becomes the medium of the celebration, and not just an occasional phenomenon, thereby enhancing the sacrality of the whole.

(3) THE PROPERS OF THE MASS. The old use, whether low Mass or high, always includes all the propers of the Mass: introit, gradual, alleluia or tract, offertory, and communion. Except for the chants between the readings, these have mostly been forgotten in the celebration of the new use, though they can be found in the *Graduale Romanum* of 1974 and the *Gregorian Missal* of 1990, published for the new use. Even the chants between the readings have been transformed beyond recognition. Unfortunately, before the council, the high Mass all too often replaced the proper Gregorian melodies with a setting of the text of the Mass propers to psalm tones, often called "Rossini propers" for the editor of the edition commonly in use then. If the celebration of the high Mass in the old form uses the proper Gregorian melodies, this will set an example for what should also be done for the new use. Even if the Rossini propers are used and co-opted for the new rite, this might just be a step in the right direction, if it does not stop there. At least the proper texts will be sung again. (Musicians should be reminded that for sung propers, the texts of the *Graduale Romanum* should be used and not those of the *Missale Romanum* which were provided for spoken recitation only.) In fact, for the celebration of either use in Latin, the old books of Rossini propers would contain most of the requisite Mass chants. Still, those who use psalm-tone propers should be reminded that, while they provide a setting of the text, they are far from adequate musically, being a kind of utility music, which Cardinal Ratzinger had warned is useless. Still, a beginning with psalm-tone propers would be a base upon which gradually to incorporate a practice of genuine Gregorian melodies. One could begin with communion antiphons, including psalm verses alternated with the Gregorian antiphon, as recently presented in a publication of our association.

A problem with this program is that the currently available missalettes do not provide any of the texts of the Mass propers

from the *Graduale Romanum*. For the Mass for which my choir sings, we provide a leaflet every week containing all the propers with translations and all the music to be sung by the congregation, but this requires considerable effort. Publishers of missalettes might be persuaded to include both options. Another problem may be that not every pastor will want to see the Gregorian propers take the role they should. The pastor may argue against the use of Latin; he may argue against letting the choir sing them, contending that these pieces belong to the congregation; he may argue that they take too long. In such a situation, a gradual approach may be the only possibility—begin with the communion, when the communion is well accepted, add the introit, even if it means beginning it a couple of minutes early. The offertory should be possible, though the priest may have to be reminded that the offertory prayers may be said *sotto voce* when music is sung at the offertory. If there is an offertory procession, there is more time for the chant. Likewise, if incense is used at the introit and the offertory, there will be time for these chants. In unusual circumstances, melismatic offertory verses can be used, or a polyphonic motet sung after the offertory chant. Experience will show what kind of time is allowed at each place.

It is important that when the old use is celebrated as a high Mass, the music be done well. It will have to serve as a paradigm. One such Mass in a large city with properly prepared and performed music could be a leaven for the musical practice of the whole city's churches. There will be those who will attend this Mass regularly and faithfully; they will come to experience the orderliness and serenity they may have missed at their parish Masses; if the music is excellent, they may find a quality they have missed in their parishes as well. There will be those who will attend this Mass occasionally; they will return to their parishes with new expectations, and may have an influence on how things are done there. There will be the curious and the skeptical, who may attend this Mass once; if it does not radiate beauty and holiness, they will go away confirmed in their belief that it was right to discard it. This poses for musicians a challenge and a high expectation; why should it not, though, for its purpose is the highest a human being can seek.

38

WORDS, WORDS

Words make a difference. Even though two words are identical in basic meaning, their connotations may suggest that one is much more appropriate than the other. When it comes to music and liturgy, the connotations of some commonly-used words point to a mistaken ecclesiology. This was an issue in the discussions of *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Sing to the Lord*. The former document represented an anthropocentric view of the church and her liturgy, while the latter, while far from perfect, included a much more theocentric view.[1] I would suggest that if musicians and liturgists would consistently use the more appropriate terms, a change in attitude might gradually be effected.

Take, for example, two words: assembly and congregation. "Congregation" was used before the council, but has largely been replaced by "assembly." Etymologically there are subtle differences. "Assembly" derives from *ad* + *simul*, a coming together, making similar. "Congregation" comes from *con* + *grex* (flock), a gathering together in a flock. Some would object to calling the people in church a flock, as in a flock of sheep, who are simply herded

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The article appeared in *Sacred Music* 137, no. 1 (2010).

[1] William Mahrt, "Commentary on *Sing to the Lord*," pp. 173–4, above.

around without exercising their own independent judgment. But I would suggest that the difference between the two terms is more functional: "assembly" implies bringing people together without distinction, being made similar; "congregation" implies being brought together under the guidance of a shepherd. That shepherd, as we know, is Christ, who is represented liturgically by the priest, who acts *in persona Christi*, who leads in the place of Christ himself. Moreover, in the use of the English language, congregation is specifically religious, while assembly is not. In my recollection, "assembly" was something we had in elementary school, where all the classes gathered in the auditorium, either for some extraordinary entertainment or for some stern exhortation in the face of a looming problem of behavior. It was a noisy affair, but it had the benefit of interrupting the normal schedule of classes, which, even for those who loved school, was a pleasant break in the routine; there was certainly nothing sacred to it. In modern church usage, "assembly" sometimes includes everyone in the liturgy, priests, ministers, and people, emphasizing their similarity, while "congregation" retains the distinction of people from clergy. I would suggest, then, that "congregation" better represents the Catholic view of the hierarchical nature of the church, and that "assembly" represents the anthropocentric view of focusing only upon the people. This stands in striking contrast to a Christocentric view of the liturgy, in which the focus is upon the action of Christ, which subsumes priest and congregation without erasing the distinction between them.

There is a consequent term that follows from the de-emphasis upon the distinction of the ordained from the congregation: "the president of the liturgical assembly" or more commonly "presider," as opposed to "celebrant." A president is a member of a group, elected by the group as one of them to preside for a time. The notion of a minister, elected by the congregation out of the congregation, is characteristically Protestant, and stands in striking contrast to the Catholic notion of priesthood, whose vocation is principally from God, and whose appointment is from the hierarchy of the church. Some will say to single out the priest as celebrant is to deny the fact that the congregation celebrates the Mass, too. That objection can be answered by using the term

"priest" itself, though "celebrant" is the traditional term. Either is preferable to "presider," which has the connotation of being temporary and provisional and not particularly sacramental.

If the liturgy should be Christocentric, then Christ should be the focus of attention, not the congregation. The question of orientation is addressed very well in this issue by Msgr. Guido Marini, Papal Master of Ceremonies, who reports two solutions, clearly endorsed by Pope Benedict: facing east, or facing the crucifix. The eastward direction places the priest at the head of the congregation, with all facing the same direction, making it clear that the action is addressing God. If that is not possible, the usage of the early church of having a large image of Christ in the apse of the church, which is faced when facing east, is approximated by placing a crucifix on the altar which serves the priest as a focal point for his celebration of the Mass.

It is not widely known that the stance facing the people is not required by the liturgy; all that is required is that in constructing new churches, altars be built so that it is possible to celebrate the Mass facing the people. This, of course, should mean that it should remain possible to celebrate *ad orientem* as well, something not always observed in the construction of new churches.

There are two different Latin terms for the stance "facing the people," *versus ad populum*, and *coram populo*. We know "versus" from its legal usage in expressing an adversarial relationship, as in Brown versus Board of Education, clearly not the kind of relation to be expressed concerning the priest and the people. Etymologically, it stems from "verso," I turn, so it says "turned to the people." This is in fact used in the Latin missal, even the new edition of 2002; there it substantiates the *ad orientem* stance: at certain points the missal directs the priest, "versus ad populum," turned toward the people, to address of the congregation, such as at "orate, fratres"; or at communion, "conversus ad populum." Such rubrics clearly express the normal stance of the priest as facing the altar, suggesting a new term "facing God." This is an important distinction, since the popular media insist on describing the stance of the priest in the old rite as turning his back to the people, consistently overlooking the fact that both priest and people face God.

"Coram populo," on the other hand, with its use of the ablative, suggests a less direct relation; the priest is not facing the people in the sense of directly addressing the people, but celebrating the Mass, "before the people." I remember the first years after the council, when priests began to celebrate *coram populo*, seeing the priest begin the Canon of the Mass by incongruously looking the congregation in the eye while saying "We come to you Father." The whole direction of the Eucharistic prayer is to the Father in renewing Christ's sacrifice, and must bring the congregation into the act of offering up as the direction of prayer. Too direct address of the congregation by the priest runs the risk of both priest and people overlooking the necessarily transcendent object of the dialogue.

Other terms indirectly express an anthropocentricism. One names the entrance hymn a "gathering song," often including its function as "greeting the priest." The introit of the Mass is the procession of the clergy into the church processing to the focal point of the liturgy, the altar, and marking the altar as a sacred place by incensing it. The music of the introit is to accompany that action and to establish the sacred character of the whole liturgy which is to take place. It is not about the congregation, but about the Mass; the congregation has already gathered, and it need not "greet" the priest yet; this takes place after the introit, when the priest greets the congregation, "The Lord be with you," and the congregation responds.

To call it a "song" is also a misnomer; it is true that song is a translation of *cantus*, but in English usage, there is quite a difference between "song" and "chant." "Song" implies the kind of pseudo-pop music that pervades our churches, and which has no particular musical characteristics which identify it as being for the introit. Chant, for the introit, means that this chant is only sung for the entrance of the priest and only on that day, that it is proper. The loss of the Propers of the Mass and of the great repertory of proper chants is one of the negative results of the council that is only now beginning to be remedied by the revival of chant scholas and the introduction of English propers, whose purpose ultimately will be to lay the ground for the revival of the singing of the Latin propers.

Another misnomer is "opening prayer." This is properly called a collect, which means the closing prayer of a liturgical action, collecting the prayers and intentions of that rite in a general summarizing prayer. Thus the collect at the beginning of the Mass concludes the entrance rite as a whole, just as the prayer over the offerings concludes the offertory rite, and the postcommunion prayer concludes the communion. The Latin collects of the Roman Mass are models of concise statement and little schools of prayer all in themselves; we rarely hear them, though, because their present English translations are banal, and longer alternative prayers have been provided, leading most celebrants understandably to choose the seemingly more interesting prayers, overlooking the classic Roman collects.

A similar misnomer is the "prayer over the gifts." The Latin is oratio super oblata, and "oblata" is better translated as "offerings," being etymologically linked to "offero," I offer. It has always seemed to me a bit presumptuous to call the bread and wine offered in preparation for the Holy Eucharist "gifts." The real gift is what is made of them, the Body and Blood of the Lord, his gift to us. Our humble offerings are but natural elements offered in preparation for the Eucharist; they do not give the Lord anything he needs or wants, but rather are symbols of our offering of ourselves to be incorporated into his Mystical Body, by his action, not ours.

Why address these matters in a journal about sacred music? Because music is an essential element of the liturgy, making substantial contributions to its sacredness and beauty. The words discussed above are off the mark precisely because they contribute more secular connotations, which militate against the sacredness of the liturgy and are thus out of consonance with its music. So let us always choose the more sacred term, that the underlying notion of the sacredness of the liturgy will be properly expressed and thus be consonant with the same purposes of the music.

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ON THE *GRADUALE ROMANUM* AND THE PAPAL MASSES

The present issue of *Sacred Music* observes the hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Graduale Romanum*. This prompts some reflections upon history, the present, and the future. John Berchmans Göschl's article recounts the history of the *Graduale Romanum*, a history of some controversy, one brought to something of a conclusion by the decision of Pope St. Pius X to publish the new gradual that was the fruit of the research of the monks of Solesmes.[1]

This was, of course, a direct consequence of his motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* of 1903, in which he decreed the restoration of Gregorian chant to public worship, authorized classical polyphony for use by choirs and the use of the organ, and disapproved of theatrical music and the use of secular instruments. The lynch-pin of this program was Gregorian chant, and for the Mass, the *Graduale Romanum* of 1908 provided the melodies in officially authorized versions.

The advantages of the new versions produced for the 1908 edition over the prevailing Medici edition are now beyond question.

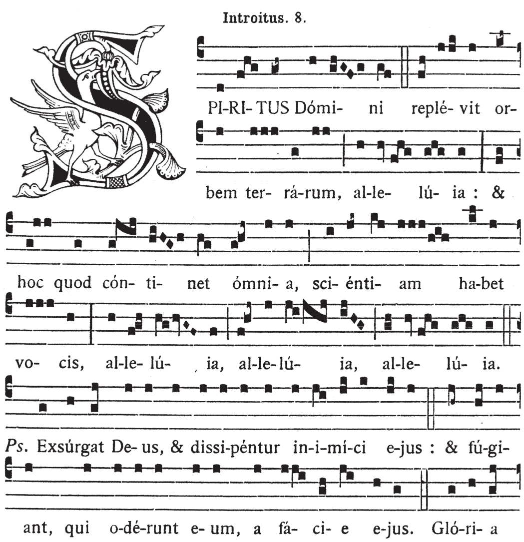
This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 135, no. 2 (2008).

[1] John Berchmans Göschl, "One Hundred Years of the *Graduale Romanum*," *Sacred Music*, 135, no. 2 (2008), 8–25.

But an advantage we seldom realize is that of the notation itself. The Solesmes versions were set in a notation modeled upon high Medieval examples, now adapted to the needs of a printed text. A comparison of a page from Dom Pothier's Liber Gradualis[2] with the corresponding page from the Medici edition[3] shows the nature of the improved notation as well as that of the restored melody. (See following two examples.)

The Second Vatican Council repeated the mandate for Gregorian chant, declaring "other things being equal, it should be given first place in liturgical services";[4] the liturgical calendar having received a major re-organization, a new edition of the *Graduale Romanum* was published in 1974, with the traditional

DOMINICA PENTECOSTES

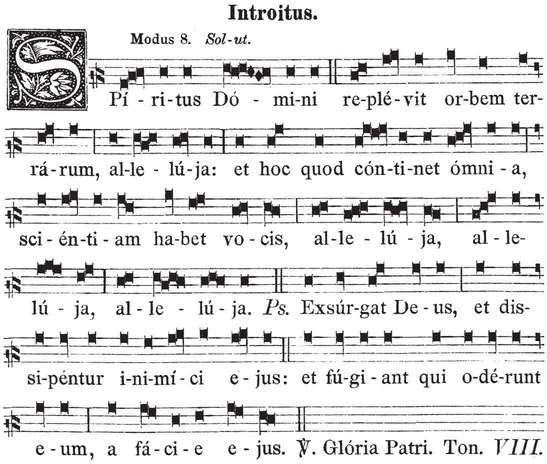


[2] *Liber Gradualis Juxta Antiquos Codicum Fidem Restitutus,* editio altera (Solesmes: E Typographeo Sancti Petri, 1895), p. 265.

[3] *Graduale de Tempore et de Sanctis juxta Ritum Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ*, editio typica (Rome: Sacred Congregation of Rites, Regensburg: Pustet, 1886), p. 184.

[4] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116. I have translated *principem locum* as "first place," rather than the slightly more vague "pride of place."

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chants arranged according to the new calendar. For scholars the *Graduale Triplex* (1979) provided the text of the 1974 edition with the staffless neumes from the earliest manuscripts added above the conventional square notation.

There is a seldom-acknowledged advantage to the post-conciliar *Graduale Romanum*. While the gradual of 1908 contained numerous new feasts for saints' days, together with neo-Gregorian melodies usually composed at Solesmes, the edition of 1974 eliminated the preponderance of neo-Gregorian melodies in favor of older chants. My experience over the years is that these neo-Gregorian melodies do not wear as well as the chants from the earliest historical layer of the repertory. In this respect the *Graduale Triplex* can serve a useful function, probably not anticipated by its compilers: A quick glance at any piece in the triplex shows whether that chant exists in a version in the oldest notation; if it does, then it belongs to the original layer of the notated repertory, a useful fact for its study and interpretation.

The *Gregorian Missal* was published in 1990 containing all the chants needed for Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, together with supplementary English translation. Editions in French, Italian, and Dutch have also appeared. These editions

are witness to the on-going legitimacy of the singing of chant as the principal music of the Roman rite, not only in major churches and monasteries, but in parish churches where only the days of obligation will be celebrated with solemnity.

The Church Music Association of America has made contributions to this on-going use of chant, first of all by publishing practical books of particular parts of the repertory: (1) *Communio*, the communion antiphons together with psalmody for alternation with the antiphons, providing for the extended singing of chant during the distribution of communion;[5] (2) *The Parish Book of Chant*, a collection of chants for the congregation, containing a generous selection of the Ordinary of the Mass, accompanied by English translations, as well as numerous seasonal chants likely to be sung by a congregation. Secondly, our summer colloquium has provided the occasion for singers, organists, directors, and general laity to experience the treasury of sacred music in liturgical performances. Four years ago, we had forty in attendance; this year we are planning for more than two hundred.

Indeed, sacred music in our country is presently at a cross road. Encouraged by Pope Benedict's recent exhortation to greater use of chant,

> I desire, in accordance with the request advance by the Synod Fathers that Gregorian chant be suitably esteemed and employed as the chant proper to the Roman liturgy,[6]

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[5] These psalm verses are prescribed in the earliest text manuscripts for chant (such as those collated in *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, ed. René Jean Hesbert [Brussels: Vromant, 1935; reprint, Rome: Herder, 1967]); they were recommended by the document from the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *De Musica Sacra*, September 3, 1958, ¶27c; the *Graduale Romanum* of 1974 gives a reference to psalm verses for each communion chant, though it does not give melodies for them; an older edition with melodies for the Extraordinary Form, *Versus Psalmorum et Canticorum* (Tournai: Desclée, 1961); it is available at http://www.musicasacra.com under "chant resources."

[6] Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, February 22, 2007, ¶42.

churches are upgrading their music programs and including more chant and polyphony. The Masses celebrated by Pope Benedict on his pastoral visit to the United States provide the occasion for some reflections upon the present state of Catholic Church music, and even upon the role of the *Graduale Romanum*. First of all, it must be emphasized how great a success this visit was. It seems to me that from the point of view of liturgy, several factors were important. Most important is what he said: his addresses and homilies, to no surprise for those who know his writings, were all models of intellectual substance and clarity, a substance that was fundamental, positive, and persuasive. For example, his homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral spoke of the significance of elements of the architecture: the stained-glass windows "flooding the interior with a mystical light," illustrate the mystery of the church, "flooded with grace, resplendent in beauty, adorned by the manifold gifts of the Spirit;" the complex structure of the building, whose "exact and harmonious proportions symbolize the unity of God's creation . . . but a unity born of the dynamic tension of diverse forces which impel the architecture upward, pointing it to heaven," inspiring us to lead the life of the church in harmonious and purposeful action with one another; and, finally, the spires, "a vivid reminder of the constant yearning of the human spirit to rise to God."

But equally important, was his tranquil demeanor in the conduct of the liturgy, the *ars celebrandi* which he spoke of in *Sacramentum Caritatis*;[7] the proper juxtaposition of solemnity and joy which we saw in his conduct of the worship—which we had seen in his celebrating the obsequies for Pope John Paul II and which must have been a factor in his election to the papacy—elevated each of the liturgies in a way probably not imagined by the organizers. I watched each of the services via television, an experience I wish every one of my fellow Catholics could have had.[8]

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[7] Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, February 22, 2007, ¶38–42.

[8] Videos are available at http://www.ewtn.com/uspapalvisit08/media/index.asp

The music for these events was somewhat more mixed, however. I remark on this not in a spirit of contention, but because it is our role calmly to assess the present state of affairs and to suggest orientations for the future. Generally speaking, the music for the Masses, especially in New York, was dignified, well-organized, and capably performed. Each of these Masses must have required extensive preparation and the mobilization of innumerable musicians.

Particularly in New York, there was a fair amount of a "classical" repertory, perhaps as a response to Pope Benedict's well-known predilection for Mozart, but there was also at least some sacred polyphony—Palestrina and Victoria. This music was not always directed to liturgical purposes, however, particularly at communion. The provision of music at communion was quite a challenge, since there were so many communicants, and there was a substantial time for which to provide music.

At all three of the Masses, the end of the communion time included an operatic solo, twice Franck's *Panis Angelicus*; the low point, however, was at St. Patrick's Cathedral, where "Domine Deus," from the *Petite Messe Solennelle* of Rossini was belted out in a crude fashion by a tenor. The inappropriateness of the Franck, a chestnut in a very operatic style, was demonstrated by the fact that it elicited applause from the congregation (or should it be called an audience at this point?), right in the midst of the communion time. This was a distraction from the purpose of the communion and certainly not justifiable merely on the grounds that its composer was a recognizable classical master. This shows that the distinction must be drawn between classical and sacred, and between sacred in general and liturgical in particular. While the Franck is sacred, it is questionable whether it is appropriately liturgical; while the Rossini is classical and has a sacred text, its sacredness in terms of style is questionable, and it is scarcely liturgical, verging as it does upon camp.

In general, the use of Gregorian chant did not rise to the level of having "pride of place." In Washington, there was not a single complete piece of Gregorian chant sung within the Mass. Of the Ordinary of the Mass, two movements of the *Missa de Angelis* were sung at St. Patrick's; Credo III was sung at Yankee stadium,

and in Washington, the beginning of the *Gloria de Angelis* was turned into a repeating Latin refrain in alternation with the rest of the text in English. In New York a Gregorian communion was among the several pieces sung during the communion time. Other movements, though sung in Latin were to inexplicable pseudo-chants, or saccharine hymn-like settings. If you are going to sing in Latin, why not use chants people might know and chants of proven excellence?

The responsorial psalm and alleluia were another low point. Trivial melodies repeated by the congregation, with intervening verses set to illogical melodies. The alleluias were taken from well-known hymn-tunes and were not Gregorian melodies at all. Ironically, the ceremony before the gospel took enough time that the organist had to improvise until it was time to sing the short alleluia; there was time to sing a complete Gregorian alleluia and its verse.

Entrance was always to a hymn; a Gregorian introit would have established an atmosphere of the sacred and set a very different tone for each of the Masses.

The Masses in New York seemed to aim to include the best of the tradition of concerted sacred music, without always knowing exactly how to do that. The Mass in Washington seemed to be aiming at another purpose—to show the Holy Father the diversity of the American culture as represented by a panoply of musical styles. The result was a mish-mash that had no unity and rather little quality. In fact, the commentator on the television observed that the selection of music at Washington was a repudiation of everything the Holy Father had written on the liturgy when he was Cardinal Ratzinger. This purpose suffers from the error of anthropocentrism: music at Mass should not represent the congregation to the celebrant, it should make the liturgy beautiful and sacred; it should unify the proceedings and elevate the participants.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing to observe was that the Masses themselves were not dominated by the sacro-pop music we have been inundated with over the last two generations. Was this an exceptional usage in honor of the pope, or is it possible that this is a harbinger of the future? Is that music finally destined to fade away like an old soldier?

While the Masses in New York suggested a new dawn of sacred music, we must be clear about what the daylight should look like. The incorporation of music of a certain artistic quality was a major step forward for many American Catholics watching the proceedings. But now, the priorities should be reexamined and made as clear as possible. Many kinds of music are admissible to use in the liturgy, as long as they further the glory of God and the edification of the faithful. Not all music, however, does this equally well, some not at all. Thus, the traditional priorities should still prevail: Gregorian chant should have first place; classical polyphony should have a privileged role; other music can supplement these fundamental genres, but should not overshadow or replace them.

This prompts a final reflection about Gregorian chant and the *Graduale Romanum*. The authoritative text is the Vatican edition of 1908, which does not contain the rhythmic signs subsequently provided by Solesmes for their editions. Most agree that some additional rhythmic decisions are necessary. The additional Solesmes markings are based upon systematic interpretation of the rhythm of the chant particularly identified with Dom Mocquereau. I have sometimes been asked, does the Church Music Association of America have an official position about which method should be used in the interpretation of chant? The answer is, not really. At our colloquium, the Solesmes method is rather consistently used, partly by tradition, partly by preference, but this is a practical decision. The criterion for the interpretation of the rhythm of the chant should be, does it give the chant the most beautiful interpretation possible? It is not a doctrinal or a moral issue, but an aesthetic one.

New principles of rhythmic interpretation are being proposed, particularly those based upon the system of Dom Cardine identified as "semiology." Indeed, revisions of the melodies of Vatican edition are being proposed as well.[9] All of these things must be

[9] A substantial discussion of the relative merits of these two systems is by Rev. Robert A. Skeris in his introduction to Dom Pierre Combe, O.S.B., *The Restoration of Gregorian Chant: Solesmes and the Vatican Edition*, tr. Theodore N. Marier & William Skinner (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), pp. xi–xxxii.

judged by the same criteria: is it truly an improvement? is it worthy of being employed in the sacred liturgy, year in and year out? will it stand the test of time? will it contribute to making the liturgy more beautiful, more sacred? If the answer to all these questions is positive and unambiguous, who can object? Until then, let the scholarship proceed apace; let the experimentation be undertaken; if it proves itself, then let the next step be taken; if it does not, we still have a substantial tradition to sustain us.

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MOTETS

> The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given first place [principem locum] in liturgical services.
>
> But other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action, as laid down in Art. 30.[1]
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> In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.[2]

This article appeared in *Sacred Music* 138, no. 1 (2011); it is adapted from the preface to the booklet, "Motets Sung by the St. Ann Choir," which includes texts and translations of all the motets my choir sings, made available to the congregation at Mass. Cf. http://www.stannchoir.org/Motet_list.html.

[1] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116 <http:// www.vatican.va /archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>; Article 30 reads: "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and

The Second Vatican Council reiterated the tradition that Gregorian chant is the fundamental music of the Roman Rite. Indeed, it is constitutive of the rite itself: by tradition, everything to be spoken aloud is to be sung; thus, an introit as it stands in the missal is the text of a Gregorian chant, and not just a text that happens to be set to Gregorian chant; its very entrance into the liturgy was as a chant. Likewise, each part of the liturgy has a particular Gregorian melody to which it is sung, specifying the character of that part and distinguishing it from the other parts.

A sung Mass is thus complete when sung only in chant, with people, choir, lectors, ministers, and celebrant chanting parts suitable to their different roles. The chants differ as their functions differ: for example, meditation chants which accompany the lessons are highly elaborate settings of their texts, a style conducive to meditation, while processional chants are somewhat more concise and project a greater sense of rhythmic motion, and so on. The tradition of chant is so extensive that there is a normative set of pieces for almost any occasion. In the course of a year, a choir which sings the whole Mass in Gregorian chant for just the Sundays and holy days of obligation sings well over three hundred pieces for the Proper of the Mass, while a congregation which sings six ordinaries sings about twenty-five different melodies in the course of the year.

Yet the council also gave a privileged place to polyphony and organ music. But if Gregorian chant is normative, what place is there for polyphony? The repertory of classical polyphony suggests answers to that question. Polyphony can be divided into three types: (1) complete settings of the Mass Ordinary, (2) motets, and (3) polyphonic settings of propers, whether for Mass or divine office (for the office, settings of Magnificats in all eight modes,[3]

songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence."

[2] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶120.

[3] As a text, the Magnificat is ordinary—it is the same for all vespers; but when sung, it participates in the nature of propers, since its mode is determined by the proper antiphon to which it is sung.

hymns, psalms, lamentations and a smattering of other genres; for the Mass, polyphonic settings of the chants of the propers, as in the large cycles of Isaac and Dufay; complete cycles of freely composed propers, such as that of Byrd; cycles of one genre for the year, for example, the offertories of Palestrina and Lassus; and settings of individual propers as in the works of Senfl, Gallus, and numerous others).

The employment of the polyphonic Mass Ordinary and polyphonic propers is more or less evident: mainly they replace the chants with the same text and function.[4] But the use of motets is more varied, both in history and present practice, and so is worth some discussion.

"Motet" comes from the French *mot*, "word," since a motet is a piece based upon an added text. In the Middle Ages, this meant literally that a tenor voice would sing a chant with its own text, while one or more upper parts would sing additional texts, a different text for each voice part. But even with motets of the Renaissance there is still a sense that the motet is an added text, since its text is not prescribed by the liturgy but is chosen voluntarily for the occasion. While the texts of motets, are often drawn from the psalms, the church's canonical book of songs, the route by which they are adopted passes through liturgical use, many texts having been borrowed from the divine office—particularly responsories from Matins, for example, *O magnum mysterium* or *O vos omnes*, and antiphons to the Magnificat from Vespers, e.g., *O sacrum Convivium*. Motets are also based upon favorite prayer texts, for example, *Ave Maria*. Other motets stem from a tradition of devotional texts, for example *O bone Jesu* (by Palestrina,[5] Ingeneri, Monteverdi, Anerio, Compère, Dering, Schütz, and even Brahms); some of these include a series of brief acclamations, partly drawn from scripture, whose compilation is traditionally ascribed to St. Bernard. A special genre is the gospel motet,

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[4] While the function of the polyphonic Mass Ordinary is clear, there are problems with its employment in the ordinary form; these will be addressed on another occasion.

[5] There is a setting in six parts of *O Bone Jesu* by Palestrina; one in four parts, often attributed to Palestrina, is by Ingeneri.

whose text is drawn from a gospel proper to a particular day. The liturgical model for such a motet is the occasional communion antiphon based upon the gospel of the day. This, in turn has a precedent in the divine office, where that same gospel text recurs throughout the day: the office of Matins has a homily upon the gospel of the day, and the antiphon to the Benedictus at Lauds and the antiphon to the Magnificat at Vespers are drawn from it. There was in Spain in the sixteenth century a requirement of preaching on the day's gospel text outside of Mass on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during Lent, and motets were composed reflecting these same gospel texts; thus the Spanish repertory is filled with motets upon the Lenten gospels, many beginning *In illo tempore*, the formulaic beginning of a gospel reading.[6]

Nevertheless the liturgical sources for the texts do not necessarily reflect the actual occasion of the performance of the motets. Rather, motets have a voluntary character, the place of their performance often not being prescribed, but freely chosen for the particular occasion.[7] In the history of the motet, there has been a wide variety of such occasions: sometimes motets were composed for particular important observances ecclesiastical or civic, the dedication of a church, the calling of a council, the installation of a bishop or pope, even the meal of a pope; sometimes they were sung during great civic processions or at such devotions as Benediction.

In the liturgy of the Mass, three places were often the occasion for motets: the offertory and communion and the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament. The time of the offertory might be extended by additional ceremonies, such as an offertory procession or incensation, and sometimes the incensation took extra time, since individuals in the sanctuary were incensed separately. This extra time was originally provided for by melismatic verses to

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[6] Cf. Todd M. Borgerding, *The Motet and Spanish Religiosity, c. 1550–1610* (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1997).

[7] Cf. Anthony M. Cummings, "Toward an Interpretation of the Sixteenth-Century Motet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34 (1981), 43–59.

the offertory chant. These began to fall out of use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries though one, that for the Requiem Mass, *Domine Jesu Christe*; presumably the extra time required for the incensation of the coffin still required it regularly. In the absence of such verses, the extra time at the offertory was the occasion for a motet; after the proper offertory chant, a motet suited to the day or the season or just to general devotional purposes was sung. The same is true for the communion: when there were many to receive communion, the antiphon was prescribed with verses from the psalm, just as the introit was, to be sung for the duration of the rite. These also fell out of use, and so a motet could serve that function. The elevation of the Mass was the occasion for motets: the French king in the sixteenth century prescribed that in his kingdom, a motet on *O salutaris hostia* should be sung at the elevation. Such "elevations" can be seen in Masses of Josquin Des Prez and Pierre de La Rue and still in the French tradition in Franck's *Panis Angelicus* and Fauré's *Pie Jesu*, in Masses of these composers.[8]

Such use of motets can be maintained today, though the elevation motet has been pretty well replaced by the Eucharistic acclamation. The polyphonic motet can be a voluntary addition to the normative chant propers at the offertory and communion. When there is an offertory procession or when the altar is incensed, and the time of the rite is longer than the chant, a motet suffices to provide a musical complement to the liturgical action. Likewise, the communion time in our churches often requires more music than the proper chant provides. Even when the communion chant is alternated with a few psalm verses, there may be ample time for a motet as well.

This suggests a liturgical principle: that music which accompanies a liturgical action should last for the duration of that

[8] Cistercian books of the twentieth century include elevation chants: *O salutaris Hostia, Ave verum Corpus* for feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and *Pie Jesu Domine* for Masses for the dead; cf. *Kyriale seu Ordinarium Missae (ex Graduali Cisterciensi* [Westmalle, Belgium: Typis Cisterciensis, 1933], pp. 6–7, 13–14; *Graduale Cistersiense* (Westmalle, 1960), p. 123*.

action, and this explains why, according to Anthony Cummings, the use of motets in the sixteenth century was mainly in the Mass, while the use of polyphonic settings of proper chants was more prevalent in the office[9]—in the office, the music constitutes the liturgical action itself; it determines its own duration; in the Mass the liturgical rite at the altar requires a variable amount of time, and thus music must be adjusted to the requirements of the rite. In present practice, this can be accommodated by additional psalm verses, but also at the offertory and communion by motets.

It should be emphasized that this use of motets is not the same as "alius cantus aptus,"[10] the indiscriminate replacement of Mass Propers with practically anything else. Rather, the integrity of the propers is maintained, even though they might be sung to simplified melodies, and the polyphonic music comes as an amplification and a complement to the proper chants. As one congregation member said to me, "the polyphony makes the chant sound so pure, and the chant makes the polyphony sound so rich."

As a complement to the chant, polyphonic music serves a different function in the liturgy: the complexity of parts and the harmony of the whole convey to the listener a sense of cosmic order that is conducive to an interior order, to a meditation that is in harmony with the Creator and creation. It accomplishes this through counterpoint. The normative musical style of classical polyphony is imitation—each voice takes the subject in turn, moving independently from the others and yet in harmony with them. In the face of new styles in the seventeenth century, this style was maintained as an independent style and came to be known as the *stile antico* or the *stile ecclesiastico* (the ancient or ecclesiastical style). The sense of objective and orderly motion which it projects is the basis of its depiction of cosmic order, and

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[9] Cummings, "Sixteenth-Century Motet," 55–59.

[10] *Alius cantus aptus* is the fourth option given in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (¶48) for singing the Propers of the Mass; after giving three clear options, the fourth is "any other suitable song"; this provision has effectively eliminated the singing of the propers, until recently, when they are being recovered again.

yet the resulting harmonies have a way of touching our innermost souls, allowing us to interiorize that sense of cosmic order.

This is why classical polyphony has a privileged place in the music of the church. The place of the organ is very closely related to it. Music for the organ shows the same principles of imitation as does the motet. In fact the early Baroque included forms that consciously embodied the imitative style and are derivative of the motet—the ricercar, the fantasia, and the canzona—the predecessors of the fugue. Organ music can thus serve the same function of a contrapuntal amplification upon the chant when the occasion requires it. Thus classical polyphony and organ music together complement the chant in its close connection with the liturgical action, "whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites."[11]

[11] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶112.

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THINKING ABOUT THE ORGAN

It is no secret that the cultivation of organ music, especially in Catholic liturgies, has suffered since the recent liturgical reforms. Yet, it should be recognized that, in the recovery of the sacred in our liturgies, the organ can play a central role. It is the canonical sacred instrument; playing the repertory of sacred literature or improvising upon sacred melodies, it can evoke the sacred and the eternal in the same way that vestments, stained glass, incense, and Gregorian chant can. Its proper location is the church, and this cannot be said of the piano or the guitar; its proper repertory is polyphonic, based upon traditional liturgical melodies, and thus it is music's ally in placing the liturgical actions in the context of the beautiful and the transcendent.

Making the liturgy more beautiful in everyday practice meets some serious limitations on the cultivation of excellence. The organ can be a way of introducing a paradigm of excellent performance into the liturgy. A beautifully played prelude or postlude sets a standard against which efforts in improving the music sung in the rest of the liturgy can be compared. There is something to

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This chapter is excerpted from "New Directions for Sacred Liturgy" that appeared in *Sacred Music* 133, no. 3 (2006).

be said about cultivating the performance of the great literature for the organ regularly as a framework for the Sunday liturgy. If one enters the church to the sound of the transcendent music of Bach or Franck, the attention is immediately lifted, the soul is stirred to anticipate the magnificent action which is to take place in the celebration of the Mass. But the approach to the selection of the repertory to be played should also be purposeful: What function should the playing of a major piece before or after the Mass serve?

Consider the prelude: it should put the listener in a frame of mind to anticipate what will be done in the liturgy; there should be, on the one hand, a sense of repose and recollection, a setting to rest of the concerns of the outside world and a turn to the sacred; and on the other hand, there should be an anticipation, an ordering of the affections, a placing of oneself in the context of the presence of God in preparation for divine worship. A prelude comes as an immediate preparation to the introit—if *that* is sung in chant, the melody can be the basis of improvisation, helping the congregation to receive the chant as something already familiar. My experience is that this kind of recollection with anticipation is best provided by pieces from the repertory that are quite contrapuntal. Meditation on the beauty of a contrapuntal piece reminds one of a cosmic order that reflects the proper role of the Creator in relation to his creation, and from there the turn to active worship is but a natural motion.

What is the role of a postlude? Curiously the Roman Rite provides no recessional chant, but organists often let loose at the end of Mass with one of several big pompous pieces by French organists. This effectively clears out the house! Yet think of the paradigm the liturgy already provides: The traditional Roman rite has an extensive chant for the introit, but nothing for the exit. There is a brief *Ite, missa est* and then you are on your own! The tendency to want to provide an extroverted, somewhat triumphant piece at this point must be similar to what inspired Episcopalians of previous generations to transfer the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* of the Mass to the end of the service.

Yet, perhaps the traditional liturgy had it right already. Much of the trajectory of the service makes the communion time be the

object of attention; after which the worshipper is left on his own. I have often played a block-buster piece at the end of the Mass and witnessed the effect—the entire congregation obligingly exits the church on cue. When I realized that this was happening and decided that it was not what I wanted to happen, I changed my strategy: there needs to be something rhythmic to usher the procession out of the church, without conveying to the congregation that it is time for them to go, followed by music that conveys a sense of reflection upon the liturgy that has just been celebrated.

I find that a set of chorale variations contains just the ticket; I choose one of the more extroverted variations for the procession out, and then follow it with something more reflective, and then a few variations which progressively become more and more introspective, ending with the quietest variation, after which I sneak out of the loft, leaving quite a number of members of the congregation still there praying. The pieces can vary from Sunday to Sunday, but once the pattern is established, the effect is quite the same—the music is conducive of a reflection and recollection that reminds them that they have just received the sacrament, and they can turn their attention to prayers of thanksgiving.

These are just two places in the liturgy where the organ can make a substantial difference in the participation of the congregation by the selection of its music. Suffice it to say that if the purpose of the organ playing is to make the liturgy more beautiful, then the organist should be intent never to play anything that is less than excellent music. No background music, no playing innocuous transitions that convey nothing in themselves; rather, each piece, in accord with the action it accompanies or complements adds an element of the transcendent and the beautiful.

42

VIENNESE CLASSICAL MASSES

The present issue includes several articles touching upon the sacred music of Viennese classicism. This provides an opportunity to reflect upon questions that arise concerning that repertory. These have been persistent questions, asked in their own time, in succeeding generations, and even in the present.

The fundamental question is one that pertains to the church music of our own time as well: to what extent can the music of the church adopt the idioms and procedures of the surrounding secular musical world? We read complaints from the eighteenth century that the church music had become too operatic, that it did not respect the conventional distinctions between music of the church, chamber, and theater. Yet masses of Haydn and Mozart particularly, but also of other composers—Schubert, Michael Haydn, Weber, and even Beethoven—have had a stable place in the repertories of certain large city churches, particularly in Europe, but also in the United States; so it will be useful to consider the issues surrounding these works to come to an understanding of their use in the sacred liturgy.

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The focus should be upon the normative works, not the curious exceptions. For example, there are certain masses of the type missa brevis in which the texts of the longer movements, particularly the Credo, are "telescoped," the text is divided among the four voice parts, which then sing four successive lines of text simultaneously, resulting in a very brief setting of the complete text, but one for which it is difficult for any listener to discern just what is being sung. At the opposite extreme are extended compositions with ample space for the development of each movement; perhaps the most obvious example is the *Missa solemnis* of Beethoven, a work whose music alone totals a duration of well over an hour. (Recordings show durations of about seventy-two minutes; contrast this with nineteen minutes for Mozart's *Missa brevis*, K. 275, or his *Missa longa*, K. 262 at twenty-seven minutes.) The liturgy which included such a work would be quite long, but more important, the music would most likely dwarf the other parts of the liturgy. Whether such works are remotely conceivable for liturgical use is not the point here; rather the question is, are the standard works often sung for the sacred liturgy appropriate for this use?

To take a contrasting example: my choir frequently sings masses of Orlando di Lasso; these are mainly parody masses—masses based upon the polyphonic materials of a pre-existing piece, a motet or a chanson. I usually choose a mass based upon a motet, since the borrowed material is more securely sacred. Some of Lasso's masses use a borrowed chanson so transparently as to raise the question of whether their sacred character is compromised by it. Yet, others show striking differences from the secular piece. For example, Lasso's *Missa Il me suffit*: the chanson is a simple piece, very homophonic with considerable repetition. The mass uses the tune of the chanson, but incorporates it into a relatively complex contrapuntal texture. For anyone who knows the chanson, the difference between the secular and sacred versions is quite clear; the elements of the secular have been transformed into a sacred work, have been set aside to sacred purposes and distinguished from the secular by a remarkable change in musical style.[1]

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[1] A similar transformation of this tune happened in the realm of the Protestant

The questions are similar for the Viennese classical masses: are there distinguishing features that set off the style of orchestrally accompanied solo, vocal, and choral music sufficiently to maintain the sacred character needed for use in the liturgy? First, a fundamental issue should be cleared up. These works are often called "concert Masses," placing them in a category of works such as the *War Requiem* of Benjamin Britten or the *Mass* of Leonard Bernstein, implying that they were composed for performance in a concert rather than in a Mass.

Nothing could be farther from the truth; they were composed for and regularly performed for the liturgy. The confusion may come from a misreading of the term *style concertato*, from the early seventeenth century. It pertains to sacred music, performed in the liturgy, and it means that there are independent instrumental parts playing together with vocal and choral parts; it was distinguished from a style designated by *da cappella*, meaning that instruments doubled the choral parts. Clearly, then, the masses of Mozart and Haydn were in a "concerted style," but intended for liturgical performance. To avoid this confusion, it is probably better simply to refer to them as "orchestra Masses."

For the orchestra masses of the Viennese classical composers, what, then, are the hallmarks of the sacred that distinguish their style from that of operatic or symphonic music in general? I would identify four.

(1) The text of the Latin ordinary. By the eighteenth century, Latin was certainly received as a sacred language; its principal usage was liturgical, though it retained some academic currency as well. Moreover, the texts of the orchestral masses were (with the exception of Requiem masses) always the same; congregations could be expected to grasp these texts in performance. Today, the use of Latin is even more exclusively liturgical. Curiously though, the average congregation of today has a better chance of comprehending the text of the Latin ordinary than congregations before the council could. Since most of the congregation has had ample

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chorale, for *Il me suffit* became *Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit*, a chorale used in numerous works of J. S. Bach and others.

opportunity to say and sing the texts in the vernacular, this familiarity is an aid to their comprehension of the same texts in Latin. In the case of my own congregation, which sings the Latin ordinary in Gregorian chant on normal Sundays, while the choir sings a polyphonic ordinary on major feast days, the congregation has an intimate familiarity with the Latin text through having sung it and are ready to hear a beautiful setting of it sung by others. A slight complication has been created, however, by espousing a principle of translation which did not value the use of a specifically sacred language; instead, our vernacular translations were the result of an attempt to use everyday language to express eternal verities, very often quite unsuccessfully. One hopes that the new translations will be better at this, though it seems likely that in another generation, we will need yet another and better translation.

(2) Simultaneous choral declamation. These masses have prominent passages in which all four choral parts declaim the text simultaneously. A notable example is the Credo of the Mass in G Major by Franz Schubert. Unison singing, such as of chant, represents and even effects a concord of hearts; when all sing the same thing together, the beauty of the music persuades them to do it exceptionally well, and this unifies not only their singing but also their intentions. Similarly, when all four vocal parts singing a mass declaim the text together they represent to the congregation that same kind of unity of intention on the part of all singing. This kind of singing is not characteristic of opera, where each singer carries a separate role; operatic ensembles represent the opposite of a unified intention—they are most often a melange of conflicting individual purposes held in dramatic tension.

(3) Contrapuntal style. The tradition of sacred music from the Renaissance was to set sacred texts in an imitative style: each voice imitates the initial voice in turn, and then they come to a cadence together. Throughout the Baroque era, this style was known as the *stile antico*, or the *stile ecclesiastico*. Though this imitative style was characteristic of much vocal music of the Renaissance, sacred or secular, in the Baroque it came to be set aside for sacred purposes. The epitome of this sacred style comes at the conclusion of the Gloria and Credo movements of many of

these masses, where a grand fugue sets the texts "In gloria Dei Patris. Amen," and "Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen." Such fugues occur rarely in opera, and when they do they are in fact ironic references to fugues as a sacred topic.

(4) The avoidance of *da capo* repeats. Operatic arias frequently make use of an ABA form, in which the first and more substantial section of the aria is repeated after a contrasting B section. This makes a somewhat closed form, in which vocal virtuosity can be displayed, especially in the repeat, which can be ornamented heavily. The closed character of the operatic aria does not suit liturgical texts: the integrity of whole movements does not allow smaller parts to be so separated off. This *da capo aria* form is most characteristic of opera arias of the Baroque era, though it persists in later operas as well. I have remarked on the distinction this employment makes in the case of the music of Antonio Vivaldi: Vivaldi's operas routinely make use of such arias; his sacred music, notably the Vespers music, does not; rather the sequence of psalm verses required an ongoing formal procedure that precludes the use of *da capo* repeats.[2]

So what is all the fuss about operatic elements in Viennese masses? It must be acknowledged that the elements are there—particularly in prominent vocal solos. The question is not whether the elements are there, but, as in the case of Lasso masses, whether these elements are transformed into a sacred whole, making them worthy means of expressing the sacred function of the Mass. Just as in the case of the Lasso mass, these hallmarks of the sacred style help to create a distinction between the liturgical and the operatic.

It is not that there should not be secular elements in the music for the Mass—that has often been the case. It is that the secular elements should be incorporated into a larger whole which is sacred. In fact there is an important purpose in the incorporation of secular elements: it symbolizes the simple fact that though we live in the world, we still address our lives toward God; we assimilate the secular into a larger sacred whole. It has always

[2] See my "Antonio Vivaldi and His Sacred Music," pp. 333–352, above.

been a characteristic of sacred things that they may be made of secular elements, which, by being placed into a larger context, are subsumed into the service of the sacred.

For sacred services, it seems to me that whatever is used must have two essential criteria: it must be excellent, and it must be suitable to its sacred purpose. Kurt Poterack in the "Last Word" contrasts suits and jeans to wear to Mass: both are secular, but suits are suitable, jeans are not. Clearly, the masses of Mozart and Haydn are excellent; their thoroughgoing use of the four hallmarks discussed above demonstrates their suitability to sacred purpose.

How does this differ from the present-day use of songs based upon current popular idioms (or at least idioms that were current in the seventies)? Their only connection with the sacred is in their texts, and that is sometimes tenuous. Their musical style is indistinguishable from their popular models, and so they have no particular musical suitability to the sacred, quite distinct from the Haydn and Mozart examples. Moreover, in comparison with their popular models, they do not match up even to the quality of the models; they lack the quality of excellence, even in the most basic sense. They are musical jeans, not worthy of incorporation into the temple.

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